

Leadership of PROPHETS

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Preface

Leadership is a process of social influence to accomplish a common goal. Leadership is also a process of encouraging and helping others to work enthusiastically towards objectives. Leadership is the behaviour of an individual when he made the head of a group to achieve the desired goal.

Leadership is an important part of Islamic society. Islam emphasizes on the unity of man in every sphere of life. In this regard, Islam originates the idea of leadership in every aspect of life. Even in a journey made by three persons, it orders to make one of them as their leader. Islam uses various terms for a leader to indicate the area of his authority and eventually discusses the characteristics of leadership, which is mostly influenced by the core teachings of Islamic belief. If we can implement the concept of Islamic leadership correctly, humanity will get a new dimension of prosperity and success everywhere.

Islam, the complete code of life, declares leadership as a trust (amanah), and gives a detailed description about it. According to the Islamic view, leadership is a sacred position that can solve the problems of humanity and guide them to the eternal betterment in this world and in the hereafter. Hence, the focus of leadership in Islam is on doing good.

Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) said, "Every one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock. The leader of people is a guardian and is responsible for his subjects. A man is the guardian of his family and he is responsible for them. A woman is the guardian of her husband's home and

his children and she is responsible for them. The servant of a man is a guardian of the property of his master and he is responsible for it. No doubt, every one of you is a shepherd and is responsible for his flock" (Bukhari and Muslim).

People generally think that a leader is someone who is the head of a state, institution or group. From this hadith, we can learn that everyone is a leader. Everyone in their lifetime gets an opportunity to become a leader, some time and somewhere or the other. A person who leads is a leader of the people in that place.

Islam teaches people to appoint a leader, even when they are on a journey. Abu Said al-Khudri reported that, prophet said, "When three are on a journey, they should appoint one of them as their commander" (Abu Dawood). Thus, the hadith emphasises on the importance of leadership, even when the number is as small as three.

All the Prophets were leaders. We have a lot of leadership lessons to learn from the Prophets, as they are the people who are chosen by Allah as His messengers and are the best ones to be chosen among all human beings, who act as a guide and role model and to move them from darkness to light. The Qur'an has referred to five Prophets as leaders. Adam in 2:30, Ibrahim in 2:124, Yahya in 3:39, Yusuf in 12:25 and Dawood in 38:26. In the book I have spoken about the leadership qualities of all the 25 Prophets who are mentioned by name in the Qur'an.

The Prophets were trained for leadership and they also used their talents to fulfill their role as a leader. They led the people during their tenure, invited people to worship Allah alone and strived to resolve burning issues of their time. Some people accepted them as Prophets and some were not ready to believe them and follow them. This book comprises of a number of chapters, which focus on discussing the training of leadership, talent used during their leadership and about leadership qualities possessed by Prophets.

Leadership can be understood at many levels. The first level is 'Position', where the leader uses his 'Right', and people follow because they have to. The second level is 'Permission', where leader uses his 'Relationship', and people follow because they want to. The third level is 'Production', where leader uses his 'Result', and people follow because of work. The fourth level is 'People Development', where people follow because of what has been done for them. The fifth level is 'Pinnacle', where leader uses 'Respect', Thus, a person who reaches the top most level is a great leader.

This book is an attempt to make people aware about the concept of Islamic leadership from the life of Prophets. Readers can use this valuable knowledge to practically implement it in their lives, and achieve ultimate success in this world and the hereafter. Everyone, irrespective of their qualification, skill and ability, gets an opportunity to become a leader, thus, they can use relevant leadership qualities. Finally, this book is an effort to help people in their leadership journey by following the footsteps of the greatest leaders, the Prophets.

Dr. Syed Kazim

Acknowledgements

Saying ‘Thank You’ is more than good manners; it is a sign of nobility. One who is most deserving of praise in Allah. May He be glorified. He has bestowed upon His slaves spiritual and worldly favours. Allah has taught us to be grateful to Him for those blessings.

Islam exhorts us to thank people for their kindness. To worship Allah alone is the duty of a slave of Allah. Being grateful is also a duty. Thanking people is very important in Islam. The Prophet said, “He who does not thank people, does not thank Allah” (Ahmad and At-Tirmidhi). The Prophet also said, “He who does not thank people is unthankful to Allah” (Abu Dawood).

I would like to thank Allah for rightly guiding me, to use his given talent and knowledge in his cause. I also thank Allah for giving me new ideas, capability and commitment to complete this book.

I would like to thank my parents for giving me the best possible education and making me confident enough to take up new things in life. I would like to thank my beloved wife, for her continuous support, assistance and for taking care of my two children. This helped me in completing the book with complete focus.

There are many people who have directly and indirectly contributed to my personal growth, which has ultimately helped me to emerge as a consistent writer; I would like to take this opportunity to thank them all.

Dr. Syed Kazim

I

Training and Talents

Training Prophets for Leadership

Introduction

Allah sent Prophets as leaders to various communities and nations. It was a must for them to develop certain leadership qualities for the effective execution of their duty. Jabir bin Abdullah narrated, "We were with Allah's Messenger picking the fruits of the Arak trees, and Allah's Messenger said, "Pick the black fruit, for it is the best". The companions asked, "Were you a shepherd?" He replied, "There was no prophet who was not a shepherd" (Bukhari).

Prophet Musa was also a shepherd, as recorded in the Qur'an. When Allah called Musa on Mount Tur in the Sinai Desert, Allah asked Musa "And what is that in your right hand, O Musa?" (Qur'an 20:17). Musa replied back to Allah, "He said, "It is my staff; I lean upon it, and I bring down leaves for my sheep and I have therein other uses" (Qur'an 20:18). From this we learn that Musa was a shepherd, as he would use his staff to bring down the leaves for his sheep.

Prophet Muhammad worked as a shepherd at the age of eight, because he wanted to help his uncle Abu Talib since he wasn't rich and had a big family with many children. As a young boy, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) earned his living as a shepherd. He would take the sheep and cattle of his relatives and those of the people of Makkah to the surrounding deserts to graze.

Prophets were shepherds means they took care of the sheep. Through this, the shepherds learn to become compassionate as the animal is weak and small.

Umar was also a shepherd. He worked as shepherd, for his father and his aunts. When Umar became Caliph, he came to the place where he used to be a shepherd and said,

“La ilaha illallah, The Most High and The Greatest who gives whatever He wants to whomever He wants. I used to be the shepherd for my father in this place and I would wear some harsh wool clothes. And my father was harsh and he would make me exhausted when I would work and he would beat me up if I don’t work and today there is no one between me and Allah”. Once Umar called people to the Masjid and when they all assembled, Umar stood on the pulpit and said, “I had some aunts and I would take their goats or sheep to this valley and I would come back at the end of the day and they would give me a handful of dates or raisins and I would have a miserable day”. This training as a shepherd helped him to become a great leader.

Qualities

While working as a shepherd, they pick up and develop many qualities. The following are the qualities.

1. Patience

From being a shepherd, one learns the art of patience. The sheep do not remain at one place; they go where ever they feel like and just follow the path of the other sheep in the flock. In order to keep them together, one needs high level of patience. Being a shepherd develops one’s skill of patience. A shepherd is busy taking care of his flock from the rising of the sun until nightfall. Since sheep take so long to graze, a shepherd needs to be very patient in dealing with his flock. All day long, he is outside in hot weather. In short, the shepherd’s life is a hard life, and so he must be very patient in coping with daily hardships. A leader should have a high level of patience. He should have patience as he is dealing with people, and every individual is different.

2. Responsibility

When the shepherd takes the flock of sheep for grazing, he leads from the front as he needs to search for the right

place. When they are coming back, the shepherd walks behind because he has to protect them from predators. Sometimes the shepherd has to walk alongside the flock and sometimes in the middle to keep them in line. This act of taking the flock to the right place and getting them back create a sense of responsibility. This helps them become responsible human beings during their leadership. A leader should remember that he is responsible for each and every thing, and should take all steps and decisions, with sense of responsibility.

3. Accountability

The shepherd is the person who does not own the property he is taking care of. He does not own the sheep, which he is taking care of. Rather he is accountable to someone for the flocks. Thus, through this the shepherd develops a sense of accountability for everything he does. A leader has authority, but the authority can only be effectively used when he is accountable for the same. If accountability does not exist, then he would misuse his authority.

4. Caring and Protection

As a shepherd, one learns the art of caring. A shepherd spends time with flock of sheep and it makes him compassionate. He would have to give special care when they are not keeping well. This quality of caring helped Prophets to care for their companions.

The shepherd cares more about the safety of the flock than his own safety. The shepherd knows what is better for the flock. The shepherd works tirelessly for the benefit of the flock. A leader should develop the quality of a shield and protector.

5. Vigilance

Being a shepherd, one has to be attentive and alert about taking care of his flock so that they do not get lost, they do

not graze unlawfully into somebody's farm or fold or become easy prey to killers or wild animals. This ability of being attentive helps the Prophets be cautious about what his followers are doing. A leader should be attentive to internal and external environment, so that he can take necessary actions.

6. Empathy

Empathy is the ability to understand and share the feelings of another. While being a shepherd one develops the ability of taking care of animals. This empathy helped Prophets understand the concerns, problems and issues of people around them and they would try to solve them. A leader spends time with people. The success of the leader depends upon how he deals with people. When a leader deals with empathy, it would help him become effective.

7. Organisation and Control

Apart from leading the flock across wilderness, shepherds have to keep the flock together and care for each individual sheep or lamb. They would know sheep by name, and the sheep in turn will know the shepherd's voice. From being a shepherd, one learns the art of building unity. The shepherd is attentive to three important aspects that are present in all human groups. They are to achieve a common task, they are to be held together and the needs are to be met. Thus, a shepherd learns the art of organising and controlling.

8. Physical Strength

Being a shepherd, one has to walk, run and always be on his toes to ensure that the flock of sheep stay together and do not get lost. Performing physical activities requires considerable use of arms legs and whole body. Thus, a person gains physical strength and stamina while being a shepherd. This physical strength would help a person become an active leader. Only when a leader is physically

strong, he can continuously work, move around and has the ability to withstand physical and mental stress.

9. Awareness

The average height of a sheep is 2.5 feet and the average height of a human being is 5 feet. The human being is almost double in height, when compared to a sheep. As the shepherd is tall enough, he is always in a position to see things which are far away and which the sheep are not able to view. So, if there is any problem or danger, the shepherd views it first and takes necessary action to protect the sheep. A leader should imbibe this quality, as he should have a broader view and should be able to see what others are not able to see and caution them about the danger.

10. Simplicity

Shepherds take sheep to a faraway place, so that they can graze well. He does not have comfortable place to sit, while the sheep are grazing. So, the shepherd leads a simple life. When this is done on a daily basis, it becomes a way of life, for the shepherd. A leader should live a life of simplicity; a simple life will not distract the leader from his primary objective and will also act as an inspiration for his followers.

11. Contemplation

When the shepherd takes the sheep for grazing, he has a lot of time. He may contemplate over nature and universe, as a peaceful environment is around him. A leader should spend time in thinking and contemplating over things. This helps him realize the uniqueness and ability of the Creator, and he gets closer to Allah.

12. Satisfaction

The Prophet (pbuh) said, "Every Prophet that Allah sent herded sheep (at one time or another during his life)". The

companions said, "And even you?" He said, "Yes, I herded them for Qararit" (Bukhari). Qararit means a portion of a dinar or dirham, which was mentioned as wages by Prophet. The shepherd does not get very high monetary benefit for the work. Then what do they really get in return? It is the satisfaction of flourishing the flocks. The shepherd learns that he would not work for material gain but for satisfaction. A leader can be great when his focus is on his task rather than material gain.

13. Bravery

A shepherd's enemies are predatory animals. To face the attacks of wild animals upon his flock, a shepherd certainly has to be brave. This quality is absolutely necessary when a person is a leader, as he would have to face enemies and take bold decisions. A leader would encounter challenging situations.

14. Lawful Earning

Allah most certainly could have provided Prophets with wealth and comfort, so that they would not have to work as shepherd. But instead, they were being trained. The most honorable way is to eat what one earns through proper work. One who invites others to Islam should be independent of all human beings. A self-sufficient man is dignified in the eyes of others. A leader sets examples. Thus, a leader should set an example by earning money through lawful means.

15. Individual Attention

All animals are not same. A shepherd nourishes them all. For some strictness is required and for others mercy is required. Some animals are independent and some animals just follow other animals. The shepherd is aware of this and deals with them according to nature and temperament. From this the person learns the quality of individual attention to all followers. This quality would help a leader acquire inter-

personal skills. A leader should do justice by giving attention to all members of the team.

16. Humility

The very nature of a shepherd's work requires him to be humble. Serving sheep, guarding them from predators, are the duties of a shepherd. Difficulties do not trouble the shepherd, and as each day of labor passes, pride and arrogance are driven away from his heart. He becomes humble and it is his defining characteristic. As a leader, one should be humble to his people and his followers and should show love and affection, so that people are attracted towards him and obey him.

Conclusion

Struggles are required in life. Going through life without any struggle would cripple us. When Allah takes people through problems, difficulties, we should realize that it is for our own good and they would make us stronger and prepare us for a better future. Prophets served as shepherds, so that various skills of leadership could be imbibed in them, and thus they went on to become effective leaders.

Allah says, "And it is possible that you dislike a thing which is good for you, and that you love a thing which is bad for you. And Allah knows and you do not know" (Qur'an 2:216). When Allah is taking people through hard situations, we do not understand the wisdom behind it. One should know that Allah might be preparing him for a bigger challenge or task and the current situation might be a training ground. The tending of the flock of sheep becomes preparatory ground for training a person to become a leader. Allah gave training to Prophets before entrusting them with the responsibility of Prophethood.



Talents of Prophets

Introduction

Talent basically refers to a marked innate ability, like artistic accomplishment. It is a natural endowment or ability of a superior quality. It is above average ability.

Allah had given miracles to many Prophets as mentioned in the Qur'an. A miracle is something which cannot be repeated by others. But talent can be replicated and is present in due course of nature. Examples of miracles are camel coming out of a mountain, the staff of Musa being converted into a snake, a path being made in between the sea by striking the staff, Isa being born without a father. When we ponder over lives of Prophets we realise that Prophets possessed particular talents.

Every Prophet was a leader, and these leaders were blessed with of talent.

1. Prophet Nuh

Prophet Nuh possessed the talent of building a ship. Allah says, "And we carried him on a (construction of) planks and nails" (Qur'an 54:13). "(So it was), until when Our command came and we said, "Load upon it (i.e., the ship) of each (creature) two mates and your family, except those about whom the word (i.e., decree) has preceded, and (include) whoever has believed". But none had believed with him, except a few. And (Nuh) said, "Embark therein; in the name of Allah is its course and its anchorage. Indeed, my Lord is Forgiving and Merciful" (Qur'an 11:40-41). From these verses we learn that the ship was made using planks and nails. Anchors were used which helped the ship to move.

It was not an easy task to construct the ship and it required talent to do so. Thus, only a person with high talent could build such a massive ship.

2. Prophet Ibrahim

Allah says, "And (mention) when Ibrahim was raising the foundations of the House and (with him) Ismail, (saying), "Our Lord, accept (this) from us. Indeed. You are the Hearing, the Knowing" (Qur'an 2:127).

Ibrahim constructed the Kaaba on the command of Allah. Ismail would bring the stones and give it to him and he would place them in order on top of one another. When Ibrahim constructed the Kaaba the size of the eastern wall was 48 feet, the size of the Hateem side wall was 33 feet, the size between the black stone and the Yemeni corner was 30 feet and the size of the western side was 46 feet.

Another talent possessed by Ibrahim was dialogue. The dialogue of Ibrahim has four stages, namely with his family, society, religious scholars and the king. Firstly, he invited his father Azar to Islam. Next, he invited common people through various examples referring to stars, moon and sun. Next were religious scholars, where he had dialogue with them. He told them about big idol that possibly he had chopped the heads of all the other idols finally he talked to king Namrud, where he asked him whether he could make the sun rise from the west.

3. Prophet Yusuf

Yusuf was told by his father, "And thus will your Lord choose you and teach you the interpretation of narratives (i.e., events or dreams) and complete His favour upon you and upon the family of Jacob, as He completed it upon your fathers before, Abraham and Isaac. Indeed, your Lord is Knowing and Wise" (Qur'an 12:6). From this verse we learn that Prophet Yusuf possessed the talent of interpreting

dreams. From the Qur'an we come across two instances when Prophet Yusuf interpreted dreams.

Due to continued pressure from his wife Zuleika, the Aziz of Egypt decided to imprison Prophet Yusuf, despite his innocence. When he was put into prison, two other men were also imprisoned. One of the men told him, "I saw in a dream that I was crushing grapes to make wine for the king", the other man said, "I dreamt that I was carrying some bread in a basket on my head and birds were pecking at the bread" and then they asked him if he could interpret their dreams. He said, the man who dreamt that he was crushing grapes will soon be released from here and will go back to his previous post. The second one, who carried the bread on his head in the dream, will be executed and the birds will start to eat his brain and the same happened.

Allah says, "And (subsequently) the king said, "Indeed, I have seen (in a dream) seven fat cows being eaten by seven (that were) lean, and seven green spikes (of grain) and others (that were) dry. O eminent ones, explain to me my vision, if you should interpret visions" (Qur'an 12:43). The king was very concerned about the meaning of his dream. As soon as the person who was released from the prison heard about the dream, he remembered Yusuf and informed the king about him. Then Yusuf was called to interpret the dream. He said, "For seven years the crops will yield abundant food-grain for the people of Egypt. After that there will be a famine for seven years during which all the food-grain lying in the storehouses will be finished and people will starve. Therefore, the people should try to grow and store as much extra grain as possible so that it would stand them in good stead during the time of famine". All these instances show how Prophet Yusuf possessed the talent of interpreting dreams.

Prophet Yusuf not only possessed the talent of interpreting dreams but also possessed the talent of managing crisis. Allah says in the Qur'an, "And the king said, "Bring him to me; I will appoint him exclusively for

myself". And when he spoke to him, he said, "Indeed, you are today established (in position) and trusted". (Yusuf) said, "Appoint me over the storehouses of the land. Indeed, I will be a knowing guardian" (Qur'an 12:54-55).

The king recognized his noble qualities. He spoke to Yusuf. Yusuf's replies astonished the king. He advised the king to give him authority so that he could handle the crisis and the king offered him a high position. He advised the king to start planning for years of famine ahead. He informed him that the famine would affect not only Egypt but the neighbouring countries as well. He planned everything so well that he could guard the nation's harvest and thereby safeguard it during the anticipated drought. This shows that Prophet Yusuf possessed the talent of handling crisis.

4. Prophet Musa

Prophet Musa possessed the talent of dialogue. His dialogue with Pharaoh is recorded in the Qur'an in Surah Ash-Shuara from verse 16 to 35. In the discussion Pharaoh reminded him about his favour, and the unintentional murder. He tried to threaten him of imprisonment and also passed sarcastic remarks. Musa did not lose his temper but stuck to his point, used rational arguments and completed the dialogue effectively by asking him to believe in the Lord of the east and the west.

5. Prophet Dawood

Allah says, "And We taught him the fashioning of coats of armour to protect you from your (enemy in) battle. So, will you then be grateful?" (Qur'an 21:80). "And We certainly gave David from Us bounty. (We said), "O mountains, repeat (Our) praises with him, and the birds (as well)". And We made pliable for him iron, (Commanding him), "Make full coats of mail and calculate (precisely) the links, and work (all of you) righteousness. Indeed, I, of what you do, am seeing"" (Qur'an 34:10-11). From these verses

we can learn that Prophet Dawood possessed the talent of making iron-dress or the coat of mails. Prophet Dawood could make the iron soft, so he could make links and prepare light coats of mail. In those days, coats of mail was important in battle. This was important addition to the defensive power of Prophet Dawood. Other nations were unaware of this technique, their armies could not stand before his army. This was a great benefit which the Bani Israil received.

6. Prophet Sulaiman

Allah says, "And Solomon inherited David. He said, "O people, we have been taught the language of birds, and we have been given from all things. Indeed, this is evident bounty" (Qur'an 27:16). From this verse we can learn that Prophet Sulaiman possessed the talent of understanding the speech of birds, animals and insects and he could also talk to them.

7. Prophet Muhammad

As Prophet Muhammad was the last Prophet, he was blessed with many talents. As Allah says, "There has certainly been for you in the Messenger of Allah an excellent pattern..." (Qur'an 33:21). Among the various talents he possessed, his best talent was that of a statesman. As a statesman, he was skillful and courageous. His vision led his followers to establish a large empire. He offered a vision to the people of Madinah, unified Jews, Christians and Muslims. He unified the Arabian Peninsula, established a great state and defeated his enemies.

He formed military alliances and avoided conflicts. He decisively defended his faith and his people whenever he had to do so. Whenever he indulged in wars, his strategies were ingenious. He always emphasized peace and harmonious relations instead of confrontation. He spent a considerable part of his life on battlefields and proved to be the most able commander of all times. He broke the tribal system after the

conquest of Mecca and set the stage for a new era of a unified community. He built sacred bounds of brotherhood within the community. He managed to put in place sound institutions supported by sound policies and used great wisdom in choosing the men to whom tasks were to be delegated. Prophet (pbuh) solved social, political and economic problems and established such perfect rules in all these fields that they left permanent imprints on people which spread to every corner of the world. He did all this in less than 23 years. With all this we can conclude that he was an outstanding statesman.

Conclusion

From the above-mentioned information, we can learn that Prophets were blessed with unique talents. The talent was given to them by Allah and then used in the path of Allah. They used their talents in their mission. They never misused them. Every individual should strive to identify his talent. The individual use talent in the cause of Islam, the way Prophets did.

II

Leadership of Prophets

Prophet Adam

Introduction

Prophet Adam is the first human being and Prophet on Earth. Adam was father of the human race. The wife of Adam was Havva, regarded as the mother of mankind. Adam was also created from earth. It is well known that earth produces crops, supports animals, and provides shelter, among many other things. Earth is important to humankind, so being created from it makes them very distinct. In the Qur'an, Adam is mentioned in 2:30-38, 7:19-25 and 20:120-121.

Qualities

The following are the various qualities from the life of Prophet Adam:

1. Seeking Forgiveness

Allah says, "They said, "Our Lord, we have wronged ourselves, and if You do not forgive us and have mercy upon us, we will surely be among the losers"" (Qur'an 7:23). The difference between Adam and Satan is in seeking forgiveness. Satan did not seek forgiveness after committing a mistake but Adam did. After Adam and Havva ate from the forbidden tree, they immediately realised their mistake and regretted it and began covering up themselves in humility. Then Allah forgave them. This shows the importance of repentance after a mistake. Thus, seeking forgiveness is basic quality. A leader might take a wrong decision he should repent and should turn to Allah for pardon. Allah would surely forgive him and would accept his repentance and would bestow mercy upon him.

2. Faith in Allah

Allah says, "He said, "Go down (from here); you are enemies to one another. There will be on earth a habitation and provision for a time". "There you shall live, there you shall die, and from there you shall be taken out" (Qur'an 7:24-25). Prophet Adam was sent to Earth. Earth, in spite of its beauty, is nothing compared to Paradise. When Allah sent Adam to the Earth, Adam did not lose faith in Allah. He kept his calm and accepted the decision of Allah. Whatever happens a leader should have faith in Allah, always bear in mind that Allah's plans are better than ours.

Conclusion

Prophet Adam was the first man, the first Prophet and the first leader on the face of the earth. His life set the basic foundation for leadership. He was the one who was taught by Allah. Allah says, "And He taught Adam the names, all of them. Then He showed them to the angels and said, "Inform Me of the names of these, if you are truthful". They said, "Exalted are You; we have no knowledge except what You have taught us. Indeed, it is You who is the Knowing, the Wise". He said, "O Adam, inform them of their names". And when he had informed them of their names, He said, "Did I not tell you that I know the unseen (aspects) of the heavens and the earth? And I know what you reveal and what you have concealed" (Qur'an 2:31-33). Allah taught Adam about various things, so that he could use them. Adam committed a mistake; he did not find adequate words to express his sense of repentance. Allah taught him suitable words to express repentance "Then Adam received from his Lord (some) words, and He accepted his repentance. Indeed, it is He who is the accepting of repentance, the Merciful" (Qur'an 2:37).

Prophet Idrees

Introduction

Prophet Idrees was born and raised in Babylon. He followed the teachings and religion of Prophet Adam. Prophet Idrees lived one thousand years before Prophet Nuh (Ruh ul-Ma'ani). Prophet Idrees was the first man who was given knowledge of mathematics through a miracle (Bahr ul-Muhit). He was the first man who learnt to write with pen, and also the first who invented stitching of cloth, people used to wear animal skins instead of clothes before his time. He also invented measurement tools for the first time. Making of weapons also started in his time and he used them in war (Bahr ul-Muhit, Qurtubi, Mazhari, Ruh ul-Ma'ani).

Prophet Idrees called people back to his forefathers' religion, but only a few listened to him, while the majority turned away. Prophet Idrees and his followers left Babylon for Egypt. There he carried on his mission, calling people to what is just and fair, teaching them prayers, instructing them to fast and to give a portion of their wealth to the poor. In the Qur'an Prophet Idrees is mentioned in 19:56-57 and 21:85.

Qualities

The following are the various leadership qualities from the life of Prophet Idrees:

1. Man of Truth

Allah says, "And mention in the Book, Idrees. Indeed, he was a man of truth and a prophet" (Qur'an 19:56). From this verse we can learn that Prophet Idrees was a truthful person. When he was commanded by Allah to go among the people of the earth and guide them, Prophet Idrees left his

seclusion and preached to them. Many listened to him and adopted the worship of Allah.

2. Patience

Allah says, "And (mention) Ismail and Idrees and Dhul-Kifl; all were of the patient" (Qur'an 21:85). From the verse we can learn that Prophet Idrees was a man of patience and steadfastness. His period of Prophethood lasted for more than 300 years and during his tenure, he remained steadfast and patient to follow and implement the command of Allah on the face of the earth.

3. Wisdom

Prophet Idrees was the first to invent the basic form of writing. Some of his wise sayings are, "Happy is he who looks at his own deeds and appoints them as pleaders to his Lord", "None can show better gratitude for Allah's favours than he who shares them with others", "Do not envy people for what they have as they will only enjoy it for a short while", "He who indulges in excess will not benefit from it" and "The real joy of life is to have wisdom" (Ibn Kathir). From this we could learn that Prophet Idrees was an intelligent and wise man and conveyed his message to the people in the most effective manner.

Conclusion

Prophet Idrees was one of the early Prophets. His rule was based on justice and truth, and consequently Allah favoured mankind with all kinds of blessings (H. Plano: The Talmud Selections, pp. 18-21). As stated in the Qur'an, Prophet Idrees was a great man of truth and loyal to Allah. Though history has forgotten him, the Qur'an bestowed perpetuity on his name. Allah says, "And We raised him to a high station" (Qur'an 19:57). It means that he was favoured and granted a special position or high rank among Prophets and was close to Allah. His leadership was filled with knowledge, wisdom and patience.

Prophet Nuh

Introduction

Prophet Nuh was sent to bring his people back to truth and the straight path of Allah. His people were those who had first adopted idol worship. Prophet Nuh is regarded as one of the great Prophets and he preached for 950 years. Only after Prophet Nuh had exhausted all manner of spreading the message to his people, did the punishment of Allah come down on them, in the form of a flood. He warned people against shirk (polytheism).

Allah says in the Qur'an, "He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Nuh and that which We have revealed to you, (O Muhammad), and what We enjoined upon Ibrahim and Musa and Isa - to establish the religion and not be divided therein. Difficult for those who associate others with Allah is that to which you invite them. Allah chooses for Himself whom He wills and guides to Himself whoever turns back (to Him)" (Qur'an 42:13).

Nuh is an important figure in Islamic tradition, as he is one of the earliest prophets sent by Allah to mankind. The mission of Prophet Nuh was to save a wicked world, plunged in depravity and sin. Allah charged Prophet Nuh with the duty of preaching. He urged his people to abandon idolatry and worship the only Creator and to live good and pure lives. Although he preached the message of Allah with zeal, his people refused to mend their ways. Ultimately the evil ones perished in the great flood.

The mission of Prophet Nuh was to warn his people, asking them to repent. At the same time, told them of Allah's mercy and forgiveness, promising them glad tidings. Allah would provide for them if they led righteous lives. Prophet

Nuh is mentioned by name 40 times in the Qur'an. Chapter 71 is named after Prophet Nuh is scattered throughout the Qur'an.

Life of Prophet Nuh is instructive. It has lessons for people. He faced a number of challenges but he overcame them.

Qualities

The following are the leadership qualities seen in the life of Prophet Nuh:

1. Patience

Allah says, "And We certainly sent Noah to his people, and he remained among them a thousand years minus fifty years, and the flood seized them while they were wrongdoers" (Qur'an 29:14). Most of the people did not believe in Prophet Nuh and waged war against him. A father used to teach his child to reject his call when he reached adulthood. Prophet Nuh saw that the number of believers was not increasing. He was sad for his people, but he never reached the point of despair and kept patience (Ibn Kathir).

Prophet Nuh continued to call his people to believe in Allah for 950 years. Historical reports state there were around 70 to 80 people who boarded the ship with him. Even his wife and son did not accept Islam and did not join him on the ship. Even in this scenario, he remained patient, and followed the commandment of Allah.

2. Maturity

Allah says, "And he constructed the ship, and whenever an assembly of the eminent of his people passed by him, they ridiculed him. He said, "If you ridicule us, then we will ridicule you just as you ridicule" (Qur'an 11:38). When Prophet Nuh started constructing the ship on a dry land, the opponents ridiculed him. They were not prepared to imagine a gigantic flood in which only the ship of Prophet Nuh could

be saved. So, they taunted Prophet Nuh and Muslims who were constructing the ship. [Prophet Nuh was not dejected or disheartened by these comments] but ignored them and continued his task of constructing the ship.

3. Resolve

Allah says, "And it sailed with them through waves like mountains, and Nuh called to his son who was apart (from them), "O my son, come aboard with us and be not with the disbelievers" (Qur'an 11:42). One son of Prophet Nuh was a disbeliever, so he was not in the ship. Prophet Nuh called his son in the midst of the storm to come with the believers, when he was surrounded with water from all sides and the distance between him and death was only a few minutes. Prophet Nuh did his best, did not lose his hope and tried till the last minute so that his son could join him on the ship, so that he could be saved.

4. Response to Challenge

After the construction of the ship Allah instructed Prophet Nuh to take a pair of all creatures. He did so. Seeing him taking these creatures to the ark, the people laughed loudly.

5. Reasoning

Prophet Nuh pointed out to his people the mysteries of life and wonders of the universe. He pointed out how the night is regularly followed by day and that the balance between these opposites was designed by Allah for our good. The night gives coolness and rest while the day gives warmth and awakens activity. The sun encourages growth, keeping all plants and animals alive, while the moon and stars assist in the reckoning of time, direction and seasons (Ibn Kathir). Thus, he used his ability to reason and invited people to believe in Allah.

Conclusion

Allah in His Mercy sent His Messenger Nuh to guide his people. Prophet Nuh's struggle went on for a period of 950 years. Prophet Nuh was an excellent speaker and a very patient man. He pointed out that the ownership of the heavens and the earth belongs only to the Divine Creator. Therefore, he explained to people, there cannot be more than one deity. He clarified to them how the devil had deceived them for so long and that the time had come for this deceit to stop. Nuh spoke to them about how Allah elevated man, how He had created him and provided him with sustenance and ability to think. He told them that idol worship was wrong. He warned them not to worship anyone but Allah and described the terrible punishment Allah would mete out if they continued in their evil ways.

Prophet Hud

Introduction

Allah sent a prophet to the tribe of Aad. This prophet was Hud, a noble man who handled this task with great resoluteness. Prophet Hud's tribe were Arabs living in Al Ahqaf in Yemen between Oman and Hadramaut, on a land called Ashar stretching out into the sea. The name of their valley was Mughith. Some traditions claimed that Hud was the first person who spoke Arabic. The following are the places in the Qur'an which speak about Prophet Hud, 7:65-72, 11:50-60, 26:123-140 and 46:21-26.

Prophet Hud was sent to the people who lived many years in the windswept hills of an area between Yemen and Oman. They were physically well built and renowned for their craftsmanship especially in the construction of tall buildings with lofty towers. They were outstanding among all nations in power and wealth. Unfortunately, it made them arrogant and boastful. Their political power was in the hand of unjust rulers, against whom no one dared to raise a voice. They were not ignorant of the existence of Allah, nor did they refuse to worship Him. What they did refuse was to worship Allah alone. They worshipped other gods, also, including idols.

Qualities

The following are the qualities of leadership from the life of Prophet Hud:

1. Trust in Allah

Hud said "Indeed, I have relied upon Allah, my Lord and your Lord. There is no creature but that He holds its

forelock (i.e., controls it). Indeed, my Lord is on a path (that is) straight" (Qur'an 11:56). This is a statement by Prophet Hud. He tells that he would rely on Allah alone, who is his Lord and Lord of others as well. Prophet Hud had faced challenges and difficult situations in his life but he faced them strongly as he relied upon Allah. It is an attitude of trust in Allah.

2. Integrity

Hud said, "I convey to you the messages of my Lord, and I am to you a trustworthy adviser" (Qur'an 7:68). "Indeed, I am to you a trustworthy Messenger" (Qur'an 26:125). This is again a statement of Prophet Hud, where he is communicating to the people that he is a person who can be trusted. He has come with a message from his Lord and whatever he is speaking is the truth.

3. Response to Criticism

Allah says, "Said the eminent ones who disbelieved among his people, "Indeed, we see you in foolishness, and indeed, we think you are of the liars". (Hud) said, "O my people, there is not foolishness in me, but I am a Messenger from the Lord of the worlds"" (Qur'an 7:66-67). The practice of the community of Aad was idolatry. Prophet Hud tried to wean them away from this false belief and presented the dawah of monotheism before them. They deemed it to be a folly and they criticised him and called him foolish and liar. Prophet Hud did not take the negative comments seriously and continued his task.

4. Reasoning

Allah says, "And to Aad (We sent) their brother Hud. He said, "O my people, worship Allah; you have no deity other than Him. You are not but inventors (of falsehood). O my people, I do not ask you for it (i.e., my advice) any reward. My reward is only from the one who created me.

Then will you not reason?" (Qur'an 11:50-51). Prophet Hud uses reasoning to convey the message People have forged falsehood about deities they worship besides Allah. In fact they possess no powers and no qualities that might entitle them to Godhead. He also tells them that he does not want any reward for his advice as he would be getting reward from Allah.

5. Concern for People

Hud warned, "Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day" (Qur'an 26:135). Allah says, "And mention, (O Muhammad), the brother of Aad, when he warned his people in (the region of) al-Ahaqf – and warners had already passed on before him and after him – (saying), "Do not worship except Allah. Indeed, I fear for you the punishment of a terrible day" (Qur'an 46:21). Prophet Hud was very much concerned about his people. His objective was to save his people from the punishment on the Day of Judgement. He kept on warning them to worship none but Allah.

Conclusion

Prophet Hud was sent to one of the strongest communities. He would rely on Allah. He was trustworthy when he advised, would take criticism in his stride, use rationality in his discussion and had great concern for his people. Prophet Hud proved to be a noble person and a great leader. He strived to abolish idol worship and invited people to Allah.

Prophet Salih

Introduction

After the destruction of the people of Aad, the tribe of Thamud succeeded them in power and glory. They also fell to idol-worshipping. As their material wealth increased so, too, did their evil ways while their virtue decreased. Like the people of Ad, they erected huge buildings on hills. Tyranny and oppression became prevalent as evil men ruled the land. So, Allah sent unto them His Prophet Salih, a man from among them. He called his people to worship Allah alone, and not to associate partners with Him. While some of them believed in him, the majority of them disbelieved and opposed him by word and deed.

Qualities

The following are the qualities of leadership from the life of Prophet Salih:

1. Trustworthy

Salih said, "Indeed, I am to you a trustworthy Messenger" (Qur'an 26:143). The people of Prophet Salih they admitted that he was a man of great integrity and extraordinary calibre: They said, O Salih, till now you were such a person among us of whom we had great expectations. "They said, "O Salih, you were among us a man of promise before this. Do you forbid us to worship what our fathers worshipped? And indeed, we are, about that to which you invite us, in disquieting doubt"" (Qur'an 11:62).

2. Response to Criticism

Allah says, "He said, "O my people, why are you impatient for evil before (i.e., instead of) good? Why do you not seek forgiveness of Allah that you may receive mercy?" They said, "We consider you a bad omen, you and those with you". He said, "Your omen (i.e., fate) is with Allah. Rather, you are a people being tested"" (Qur'an 27:46-47). Prophet Salih asked his people as to why do they hurry and rush for evil, instead of rushing for good. He also asked them why they don't seek forgiveness from Allah so that they would receive mercy. The people rather than accepting his advice began to criticize him and called him ill omen. To this Prophet Salih kept calm and politely replied that fate is with Allah alone.

Conclusion

Prophet Salih was talented and righteous; the people of Thamud had great expectations of him. In fact, he might have been chosen as their leader if he too followed their idolatrous ways. But Prophet Salih was chosen by Allah as Prophet. He was born for a higher mission, to preach against the selfishness of the wealthy and to condemn the practice of idolatry. Prophet Salih preached the message for a sustained period of time. But Thamud refused to hear his warning and instead began to ask for a miracle. Salih remained patient and continued his mission and set a great example of leadership.

Prophet Ibrahim

Introduction

There are five distinguished prophets. Prophet Ibrahim is among them. Allah says in the Qur'an, "He has ordained for you of religion what He enjoined upon Nuh and that which We have revealed to you, (O Muhammad), and what We enjoined upon Ibrahim and Musa and Isa - to establish the religion and not be divided therein. Difficult for those who associate others with Allah is that to which you invite them. Allah chooses for Himself whom He wills and guides to Himself whoever turns back (to Him)" (Qur'an 42:13).

A long time elapsed after Prophet Nuh. Although many prophets, such as Prophet Hud, Prophet Salih, and others led people towards Allah and righteousness, the polytheism and idolatry flourished. Allah, appointed Ibrahim as Prophet. Ibrahim searched for truth with his pure and clean nature. He struggled against polytheism and injustice all his life.

Ibrahim noticed that a group of people worshipped Venus. Others worshipped the moon and sun. Their divinity was unbelievable to Prophet Ibrahim because each one of them set after a few hours. After these incidents, Prophet Ibrahim fearlessly announced his worship for Allah alone. He launched his struggle against idolatry and polytheism. He warned idol-worshippers and invited them towards monotheism.

Prophet Ibrahim was thrown into fire, but Allah saved him and he came out of the fire unharmed. Then he emigrated from his original birthplace Babylon to Palestine and continued his mission.

In old age, he was blessed with two children, Ishaq and Ismail. By the order of Allah, Ismail, in infancy, and his mother were taken to Hijaz by Ibrahim. They settled around

Mount Tuhamah in a dry and barren land without inhabitants. Then he built Kaaba and described the rites of Hajj which remained prevalent among the Arabs until the advent of Islam and the call of Prophet Muhammad.

The religions of the world advocating monotheism, such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam trace themselves to Ibrahim. Prophet Musa, Isa, and Prophet Muhammad, were all descendants of Ibrahim.

Chapter number 14 is named after Prophet Ibrahim, however the story of Prophet Ibrahim is scattered throughout the Qur'an.

1. Leader of Mankind

Allah says, "And We made them leaders guiding by Our command. And We inspired to them the doing of good deeds, establishment of prayer, and giving of zakah; and they were worshippers of Us" (Qur'an 21:73). Allah made Prophet Ibrahim a leader. He was a leader of mankind, for he showed them the path to Allah and guided them according to divine command. Under his guidance many communities were raised.

Allah says, "And (mention, O Muhammad), when Ibrahim was tried by his Lord with commands and he fulfilled them. (Allah) said, "Indeed, I will make you a leader for the people". (Ibrahim) said, "And of my descendants?" (Allah) said, "My covenant does not include the wrongdoers" (Qur'an 2:124). The verse is a confirmation that Allah has made Prophet Ibrahim the leader of people. The verse also specifies that Allah's promise of leadership applied only to those of Ibrahim's children who were righteous, and that the wrong-doers were naturally excluded. This also makes it clear that, the promise did not apply to the misguided Israelites. It also did not apply to the polytheistic Ishmaelites.

2. Allah's Friend

Allah says, "And who is better in religion than one who submits himself to Allah while being a doer of good and follows the religion of Ibrahim, inclining toward truth? And Allah took Ibrahim as an intimate friend" (Qur'an 4:125). The verse states that Allah has taken Prophet Ibrahim as his intimate friend. Being Allah's friend is a very high honour, which Allah bestowed on Prophet Ibrahim.

3. Excellent Pattern

Allah says, "There has already been for you an excellent pattern in Ibrahim ..." (Qur'an 60:4). "There has certainly been for you in them an excellent pattern for anyone whose hope is in Allah and the Last Day. And whoever turns away - then indeed, Allah is the Free of need, the Praiseworthy" (Qur'an 60:6). The verses declares that the life of Prophet Ibrahim has an excellent pattern. Which means that his life can be taken as a benchmark in every aspect for people to follow. The terminology of 'excellent pattern' is only mentioned for Prophet Muhammad other than Prophet Ibrahim.

4. Comprehensive Leadership

Allah says, "Indeed, Ibrahim was a (comprehensive) leader, devoutly obedient to Allah, inclining toward truth, and he was not of those who associate others with Allah" (Qur'an 16:120). A comprehensive leader is one who is embodying all excellent qualities. The environment in which he was born was polytheistic, but his personality was unique and distinctive. He rose as monotheist, who gave the lesson of oneness of God.

Allah says, "(He was) grateful for His favours. He (i.e., Allah) chose him and guided him to a straight path" (Qur'an 16:121). Prophet Ibrahim was the chosen one from Allah. He was chosen for Prophethood and to lead.

Qualities

The following are the leadership qualities from the life of Prophet Ibrahim:

1. Vision

Allah says, "And remember Our servants, Ibrahim, Ishaq and Yaqub - those of strength and (religious) vision" (Qur'an 38:45). Here vision refers to the vision of the heart and mind. He could see and recognize the truth. He did not live like the blind in the world, but he walked the straight path of guidance, in the full light of knowledge, with open eyes. There is a subtle allusion to the fact that evil doers are deprived of hands as well as eyes. He who surrenders to possesses hands. He distinguishes between light of the truth and darkness of falsehood, since he possesses eyes.

Allah says, "And (mention, O Muhammad), when Ibrahim said, "My Lord, make this city (Mecca) secure and keep me and my sons away from worshipping idols"" (Qur'an 14:35). In the verse Prophet Ibrahim is praying to Allah to secure the city of Mecca and to keep his sons away from idol worship. Till he is alive, he would take care of them but his concern was that his sons should be on the straight path and abstain from idol worship after he departs.

Allah says, "My Lord, grant me (a child) from among the righteous" (Qur'an 37:100). This is also a prayer of Prophet Ibrahim, where he is asking Allah to give him a child from among the righteous. If he gets a child who is righteous then he would continue his mission.

2. Obedience to Allah

The life of Ibrahim is filled with tests and tribulations. He was tested when he had to go against his father and the society in which he lived; he was tested as he had to forgo all his comfort and position for the sake of Allah. He was tested when he was asked to sacrifice his son; he was tested when he was asked to leave his wife and son in the desert.

Ibrahim was embodied with all excellent qualities which make one an example to be followed. Prophet Ibrahim was a comprehensive leader. His three are, obedience to Allah, commitment to truth and rejection of idols.

3. Supplication

Allah says, "And (mention) when Ibrahim said, "My Lord, make this a secure city and provide its people with fruits - whoever of them believes in Allah and the Last Day". (Allah) said. "And whoever disbelieves - I will grant him enjoyment for a little; then I will force him to the punishment of the Fire, and wretched is the destination". And (mention) when Ibrahim was raising the foundations of the House and (with him) Ismail (saying), "Our Lord, accept (this) from us. Indeed, You are the Hearing, the Knowing". Our Lord, and make us Muslims (in submission) to You and from our descendants a Muslim nation (in submission) to You. And show us our rites (of Hajj and Umrah) and accept our repentance. Indeed, You are the Accepting of repentance, the Merciful. Our Lord, and send among them a Messenger from themselves who will recite to them Your verses and teach them the Book and wisdom and purify them. Indeed, You are the Exalted in Might, the Wise"" (Qur'an 2:126-129).

Ibrahim prayed "My Lord, grant me authority and join me with the righteous. And grant me a mention (i.e., reputation) of honour among later generations. And place me among the inheritors of the Garden of Pleasure. And forgive my father. Indeed, he has been of those astray. And do not disgrace me on the Day they are (all) resurrected – The Day when there will not benefit (anyone) wealth or children. But only one who comes to Allah with a sound heart"" (Qur'an 26:83-89).

Supplication is a way to communicate with Allah and get closer to Allah. Supplication holds paramount importance in Islam. Prophet Ibrahim supplicates for

himself, for a better future, for the city of Mecca, for his children.

4. Righteousness

Allah says, “And who would be averse to the religion of Ibrahim except one who makes a fool of himself. And We had chosen him in this world, and indeed he, in the Hereafter, will be among the righteous” (Qur'an 2:130). “And We gave him good in this world, and indeed, in the Hereafter he will be among the righteous” (Qur'an 16:122). “And We gave to Him Ishaq and Yaqub and placed in his descendants Prophet hood and scripture. And We gave him his reward in this world, and indeed, he is in the Hereafter among the righteous” (Qur'an 29:27). Prophet Ibrahim was a man of righteousness, and in the Hereafter also he will be among the righteous. It basically refers to good character.

Allah says, “When his Lord said to him, “Submit”, he said “I have submitted (in Islam) to the Lord of the worlds”” (Qur'an 2:131). Prophet Ibrahim completely submitted to Allah alone in every aspect of life. When a leader is not submissive to his Creator, then how can he expect people to obey him and follow him?

5. Compassion

Allah says, “And the request of forgiveness of Ibrahim for his father was only because of a promise he had made to him. But when it became apparent to Ibrahim that his father was an enemy to Allah, he disassociated himself from him. Indeed, was Ibrahim compassionate and forbearing” (Qur'an 9:114). “Indeed, Ibrahim was forbearing, compassionate and (frequently) returning (to Allah)” (Qur'an 11:75). Prophet Ibrahim was a man with a tender-heart; he sympathized with his father without minding his tyrannical treatment and repaid his ill treatment with prayer for his forgiveness, until it became clear to him that his father would not give up polytheism.

Allah says, "Indeed, Ibrahim was forbearing, grieving and (frequently) returning (to Allah)" (Qur'an 11:75). Prophet Ibrahim was God fearing and did not want to go beyond the limits in his love for his father; so, he broke off all his relations with his father when he realized that he was an enemy of Allah.

6. Gratitude

Ibrahim said "Praise to Allah, who has granted to me in old age Ismail and Ishaq. Indeed, my Lord is the Hearer of supplication" (Qur'an 14:39). Prophet Ibrahim was very happy that Allah had blessed him with two sons, Ismail and Ishaq, especially in his old age. He praised Allah as he blessed him with two sons, after a long period of time.

Ibrahim said "Our Lord, forgive me and my parents and the believers the Day the account is established" (Qur'an 14:41). "Our Lord, make us not (objects of) torment for the disbelievers and forgive us, our Lord. Indeed, it is You who is the Exalted in Might, the Wise"" (Qur'an 60:5). Prophet Ibrahim not only asked forgiveness for himself but he also asked Allah to forgive his parents.

7. Man of Truth

Allah says, "And mention in the Book (the story of) Ibrahim. Indeed, he was a man of truth and a prophet" (Qur'an 19:41). Prophet Ibrahim was a truthful man. The attribute of Prophet Ibrahim is mentioned to be 'Truthful' (Siddiq), which means an extremely truthful man and an honest being. Allah tested him in many ways and found him loyal and truthful in every test.

Allah says, "Indeed, We chose them for an exclusive quality, remembrance of the home (of the Hereafter)" (Qur'an 38:46). Ibrahim was anxious about his mission. He made success in the Hereafter as goal. One should constantly remember the Hereafter if one has to warn people about it.

8. Reasoning

Allah says, “(Mention) when he said to his father, “O my father, why do you worship that which does not hear and does not see and will not benefit you at all?” (Qur'an 19:42). “When he said to his father and his people, “What do you worship?” They said, “We worship idols and remain to them devoted”. He said, “Do they hear you when you supplicate? Or do they benefit you, or do they harm?” They said, “But we found our fathers doing thus”. He said, “Then do you see what you have been worshipping, You and your ancient forefathers? Indeed, they are enemies to me, except the Lord of the worlds, Who created me, and He (it is who) guides me. And it is He who feeds me and gives me drink. And when I am ill, it is He who cures me and who will cause me to die and then bring me to life and who I aspire that He will forgive me my sin on the Day of Recompense”” (Qur'an 26:70-82).

Prophet Ibrahim uses his reasoning ability to the maximum. He used his reasoning ability when he spoke to his father, people, priest and the king. With his reasoning ability, the opposition was not in a position to give any reply to his questions. The ability to reason is important, which is required when conveying the message.

When a leader is countering someone, it is necessary that he should discuss and debate and put his point forward. Prophet Ibrahim possessed great reasoning skills that he used when he had to confront the priests and the king.

9. Sound Heart

Allah says, “When he came to his Lord with a sound heart” (Qur'an 37:84). Prophet Ibrahim was a man with a sound heart. He presented himself before Allah in such a way that his heart was free from all dirt of polytheism and sins. He had kept his heart in the same healthy condition as bestowed by nature.

Allah says, "And (then) he said, "Indeed, I will go to (where I am ordered by) my Lord; He will guide me" (Qur'an 37:99). Prophet Ibrahim was a man who would always seek guidance from Allah. When Prophet Ibrahim convincingly conveyed to the community, he decided to migrate from the city. He had faith in Allah that he would be guided.

Allah says, "Indeed, We thus reward the doers of good" (Qur'an 37:110). Prophet Ibrahim was a person who always uses to do good. He would never cause harm to anybody. He would always see how he could guide people to the straight path and help them in every possible way.

10. Strength

Allah says, "And remember Our servants, Ibrahim, Ishaq and Yaqub - those of strength and (religious) vision" (Qur'an 38:45). Here the word 'strength' implies power and capability. Prophet Ibrahim was a man of great power and insight; he was a practical person. He would obey Allah and abstain from sin, and he made great efforts for raising the word of Allah in the world.

Allah says, "And (of) Ibrahim, who fulfilled (his obligations)" (Qur'an 53:37). Whatever promise Prophet Ibrahim had made with his Lord, he fulfilled them in the best possible and perfect manner, as is evident from his innumerable great sacrifices. They show his total loyalty to Allah.

11. Trust in Allah

Allah says, "... Except for the saying of Ibrahim to his father, "I will surely ask forgiveness for you, but I have not (power to do) for you anything against Allah. Our Lord, upon You we have relied, and to You we have returned, and to You is the destination" (Qur'an 60:4). In every situation Prophet Ibrahim relied on Allah.

Allah says, "And Ibrahim instructed his sons (to do the same) and so did Yaqub, (saying), "O my sons, indeed Allah has chosen for you this religion, so do not die except while you are Muslims". Or were you witnesses when death approached, when he said to his sons, "What will you worship after me?" They said, "We will worship your God and the God of your fathers, Ibrahim and Ismail and Ishaq – one God. And we are Muslims (in submission) to Him"" (Qur'an 2:132-133). Prophet Ibrahim was not only concerned about people but was very much concerned about his family members. He enjoined upon his sons as their legacy to live according to this faith and to die on this faith, as a Muslim.

Conclusion

Prophet Ibrahim was a leader who was chosen and appointed by Allah. He was a man who led a life that can be followed as an excellent example. Every aspect of his life is for people to emulate. He faced his father, his people, the priests and the king. He was tested with fear, discomfort, and adversity. His supplications were answered by Allah which led to his success. He not only fulfilled his duties towards Allah but also fulfilled his duty towards people. The leadership of Prophet Ibrahim is to lead by example.

Prophet Ismail

Introduction

Prophet Ismail is the son of prophet Ibrahim and Hajar. He became associated with Mecca and the construction of the Kaaba with Prophet Ibrahim. When he was young, Prophet Ibrahim left him and his mother in a barren land where there was not water and no crops. As he grew up, Allah commanded his father Prophet Ibrahim to sacrifice his son in the way of Allah. Ismail agreed to the command of Allah willingly. He was tested by Allah at young age. The great company of his father Prophet Ibrahim helped him becomes a great leader. Prophet Muhammad was from the progeny of Prophet Ismail.

The following are various aspects mentioned in the Qur'an about Prophet Ismail:

1. Distinction

Allah says, "And Ismail and Elyas and Yunus and Lut - and all (of them) We preferred over the worlds" (Qur'an 6:86). Ismail had to face trials. When he was a baby, he and his mother had nearly died of thirst in the desert round Mecca; but they were saved by the well of Zamzam, and he became the founder of the new Arab nation.

2. Integrity

Allah says, "And mention in the Book, Ismail. Indeed, he was true to his promise, and he was a Messenger and a prophet" (Qur'an 19:54). Prophet Ismail is considered to be a person who fulfilled his promise because he had promised his father that he would find him steadfast when he would be

sacrificed. And when the time came he gave his father a go-ahead signal and kept complete faith in Allah.

3. Patience

Allah says, "And (mention) Ismail and Idrees and Dhul-Kifl; all were of the patient" (Qur'an 21:85). Among the names of three Prophets mentioned in the verse with respect to patience, the name of Prophet Ismail is mentioned first. He was a Prophet with a lot of patience. He kept his patience while travelling with his father.

Allah says, "And when he reached with him (the age of) exertion, he said, "O my son, indeed I have seen in a dream that I (must) sacrifice you, so see what you think". He said, "O my father, do as you are commanded. You will find me, if Allah wills, of the steadfast"" (Qur'an 37:102). When Prophet Ibrahim told his son that Allah has commanded him to sacrifice him, his words were full of feelings of faith. With this solid determination the words 'Insha'Allah' reflects a high example of trust in Allah.

Conclusion

Prophet Ismail was a man who was preferred over the worlds, the chosen one and the one who is outstanding. He possessed knowledge, fulfilled his promise, remained patient and steadfast. These were the basic leadership qualities possessed by Prophet Ismail, which helped him become a great leader. He was striving in the cause of Allah since his childhood, which began with construction of the Kaaba with his father Prophet Ibrahim. From the conversation of Prophet Ismail it can be learnt that he not only reached the age of understanding but had also become a person of sound intelligence.

Prophet Ishaq

Introduction

The Qur'an does not give details about the life of Prophet Ishaq, but reliable Qur'anic commentators mentioned that when Ibrahim felt that his life was drawing to a close, he wished to see Ishaq married. He did not want Ishaq to marry one of the Canaanites, who were pagans, so he sent a trustworthy servant to Haran in Iraq to choose a bride for Isaac. The servant's choice fell upon Rebekah bint Bethuel, ibn Nahor (who was a brother of Abraham). Ishaq married her and she gave birth to a set of twins, Yaqub and Al-Eis. Various Prophets who came under the progeny of Prophet Ishaq were Yaqub, Yusuf, Musa, Haroon, Yunus, Ilyas, Al-Yasa, Ayoub, Dhul-Kifl, Dawood, Sulaiman, Zakariya, Yahya and Isa.

Qur'an about Prophet Ishaq

1. Guided by Allah

Allah says, "And We gave him Ishaq and Yaqub - all (of them) We guided. And Nuh, We guided before; and among his descendants, Dawood and Sulaiman and Ayoub and Yusuf and Musa and Haroon. Thus, do We reward the doers of good" (Qur'an 6:84). Prophet Ishaq was a great prophet. He was a one who was given the guidance to believe in the oneness of Allah.

2. Blessed by Allah

Allah says, "And We blessed him and Ishaq. But among their descendants is the doer of good and the clearly unjust to himself" (Qur'an 37:113). Prophet Ishaq was a man who was blessed by Allah.

Qualities

The following are the leadership qualities from the life of Prophet Ishaq:

1. Righteousness

Allah says, "And We gave him good tidings of Ishaq, a prophet from among the righteous" (Qur'an 37:112). "And We gave him Ishaq and Yaqub in addition, and all (of them) We made righteous. And We made them leaders guiding by Our command. And We inspired to them the doing of good deeds, establishment of prayer, and giving of zakah; and they were worshippers of Us" (Qur'an 21:72-73). The verses talk about the personality of Prophet Ishaq, who was the most virtuous in character. It was this character of being righteous which made him a leader.

2. Strength

Allah says, "And remember Our servants, Ibrahim, Ishaq and Yaqub - those of strength and (religious) vision" (Qur'an 38:45). Here the word 'strength' implies power and capability. Prophet Ibrahim was a man of great power and insight, he was a practical person. He possessed will to abstain from sin, and he made great efforts for raising the word of Allah in the world.

3. Vision

Here vision refers to the vision of the heart and mind. He could see and recognize the truth. He did not live like the blind in the world, but he walked the straight path of guidance, in the full light of knowledge, with open eyes. Those who commit evil, and have gone astray, are in fact, deprived of hands as well as eyes. He who distinguishes between the light of truth and darkness of falsehood, possesses eyes.

Conclusion

The leadership of Prophet Ishaq guided large human populations. He was the chosen servant of Allah and his descendants were men of high spiritual rank and character. He was inspired to do noble deeds and establish worship. He was generous at heart. Prophet Ishaq was the one who was blessed and guided by Allah. He was a man with vision and was righteous and had strength.

Prophet Yaqub

Introduction

Prophet Yaqub was the son of Prophet Ishaq. He preached the same monotheistic faith as did his forefathers, Ibrahim, Ismail and Ishaq. Prophet Yaqub had twelve sons, each of which would go on to father the twelve tribes of Israel. Prophet Yaqub played a significant role in the life of his son, Prophet Yusuf. Prophet Yaqub was made a faithful leader by Allah's command. His grandfather (Ibrahim), father (Ishaq), uncle (Ismail) and son (Yusuf), were all Prophets.

Qualities

The following are the leadership qualities from the life of Prophet Yaqub:

1. Supplication

Allah says, "They said, "By Allah, you will not cease remembering Yusuf until you become fatally ill or become of those who perish" He said, "I only complain of my suffering and my grief to Allah, and I know from Allah that which you do not know"" (Qur'an 12:85-86). Prophet Yaqub had immensely suffered after his separation from his son Yusuf. He was also a human; then how could he not feel the pangs of his dearest son's sudden disappearance. But he silently and patiently bore the brunt of this great sorrow. When he was suffering, he did not share it with anyone else but he shared it with Allah and asked Allah for His help and guidance. It was an appeal of a sorrow-stricken heart and also an expression of hope and trust in Him.

2. Concern about Family Members

Allah says, "And Ibrahim instructed his sons (to do the same) and so did Yaqub, (saying), "O my sons, indeed Allah has chosen for you this religion, so do not die except while you are Muslims". Or were you witnesses when death approached, when he said to his sons, "What will you worship after me?" They said, "We will worship your God and the God of your fathers, Ibrahim and Ismail and Ishaq – one God. And we are Muslims (in submission) to Him"" (Qur'an 2:132-133). Prophet Yaqub was not only concerned about the people but was very much concerned about his family members. He enjoined upon his sons as their legacy to live according to this faith and to die on this faith, as a Muslim.

3. Righteousness

Allah says, "And We gave him Ishaq and Yaqub in addition, and all (of them) We made righteous" (Qur'an 21:72). Prophet Yaqub was a man who was most virtuous in his character. Allah also says, "And We gave to him Ishaq and Yaqub and placed in his descendants Prophethood and scripture. And We gave him his reward in this world, and indeed, he is in the Hereafter among the righteous" (Qur'an 29:27).

Allah says, "And We made them leaders guiding by Our command. And We inspired to them the doing of good deeds, establishment of prayer, and giving of zakah; and they were worshippers of Us" (Qur'an 21:73).

Conclusion

Yaqub was a faithful leader. He played a significant role in the life of his son, Yusuf. Prophet Yaqub was a man of patience. He would keep his trust in Allah and waited for years to meet his son Yusuf. He would always return to Allah. He was righteous and was concerned about his sons following the path of Islam.

Prophet Lut

Introduction

Prophet Ibrahim left Egypt accompanied by his nephew Lut, who then went to the city of Sodom (Sadum), which was on the western shore of the Dead Sea. This city was filled with evil. Its residents waylaid, robbed and killed travellers. Another common evil among them was that men had sex with men instead of women. This unnatural act later became known as sodomy (after the city of Sodom). It was practiced openly and unashamedly.

It was at the height of these crimes and sins that Allah revealed to Prophet Lut that he should summon the people to give up their indecent behaviour, but they were so deeply sunk in their immoral habits that they were deaf to the preaching of Prophet Lut. Swamped in their unnatural desires, they refused to listen, even when Prophet Lut warned them of Allah's punishment. Instead, they threatened to drive him out of the city if he kept on preaching.

Qur'an about Prophet Lut

Allah says, "And Ismail and Elyas and Yunus and Lut – and all (of them) We preferred over the worlds" (Qur'an 6:86). Prophet Lut was not a descendent of Prophet Ibrahim, but was his nephew, who had embraced his religion, and Allah had favoured him with Prophethood.

Leadership Qualities

The following are the leadership qualities in the life of Prophet Lut:

1. Judgement

Allah says, "And to Lut We gave judgement and knowledge, and We saved him from the city that was committing wicked deeds. Indeed, they were a people of evil, defiantly disobedient" (Qur'an 21:74). The original Arabic word 'hukm' is very comprehensive. It means judgment, wisdom and discretion, and authority, which was given to him by Allah, so that he could execute the task of a leader and a Prophet in an effective manner.

'Ilm' stands for the revealed knowledge of the truth. Along with the ability to make judgment, Allah also blessed Prophet Lut with knowledge, as it is a basic requirement for a Prophet.

2. Integrity

Lut declared, "Indeed, I am to you a trustworthy Messenger" (Qur'an 26:162). It is a statement by Prophet Lut, he tells his people that he is a Messenger who can be trusted.; whatever he is speaking is the truth and he is not a liar.

3. Righteousness

Allah says, "Allah presents an example of those who disbelieved; the wife of Nuh and the wife of Lut. They were under two of Our righteous servants but betrayed them, so they (i.e., those Prophets) did not avail them from Allah at all, and it was said, "Enter the Fire with those who enter"" (Qur'an 66:10).

4. Struggle against Evil

When darkness fell on the town, Prophet Lut escorted his guest (who were angels) to his home. Lut's wife saw them, she slipped out of the house quietly so that no one noticed her. Quickly, she ran to her people with the news and it spread to all the inhabitants like wildfire. The people rushed towards Prophet Lut quickly and excitedly. Prophet

Lut was surprised by their discovery of his guests. and he wondered who could have informed them. The matter became clear, however, when he could not find his wife, anywhere, thus adding grief to his sorrow. When Prophet Lut saw the mob approaching his house, he shut the door, but they kept on banging on it. He pleaded with them to leave the visitors alone and fear Allah's punishment. He urged them to seek sexual fulfilment with their wives, for that is what Allah had made lawful.

Conclusion

Prophet Lut was a unique leader, he remained patient and steadfast. He called people towards the worship of one God and also countered the prevalent sin of homosexuality. When people did not mend their ways, Allah sent punishment on them. Prophet Lut was a firm and dedicated leader.

Prophet Shu'aib

Introduction

The people of Madyan were Arabs who lived in the country of Ma'an, part of which today is greater Syria. They were greedy and led wicked lives. They gave short measure, praised their goods beyond their worth, and hid their defects. They lied to their customers, thereby cheating them. Allah sent His Prophet Shu'aib to them. He asked them to be mindful of Allah's favours and warned them of the consequences of their evil ways, but they only mocked him. Shu'aib remained calm as he reminded them of his kinship. What he was doing was not for his personal gain.

They rejected the call of Prophet Shu'aib. Allah sent down on them scorching heat and they suffered terribly. On seeing a cloud gathering in the sky, they thought it would bring cool, refreshing rain, and rushed outside in the hope of enjoying the rainfall. Instead the cloud burst, hurling thunderbolts and fire. They heard a thunderous sound from above which caused the earth under their feet to tremble. The evil doers perished in this state of horror.

Qualities

The following are the leadership qualities in the life of Prophet Shu'aib:

1. Trust in Allah

Allah says, "He said, "O my people, have you considered, if I am upon clear evidence from my Lord and He has provided me with a good provision from Him? And I do not intend to differ from you in that which I have forbidden you; I only intend reform as much as I am able.

And my success is not but through Allah. Upon him I have relied and to Him I return" (Qur'an 11:88). This is a statement by Prophet Shu'aib, where he tells people that his task is only to reform them so far as it is in power.

Shuaib said "Indeed, I am to you a trustworthy Messenger" (Qur'an 26:178). It is a statement of Prophet Shu'aib, he tells his people that he is a Messenger who can be trusted, as whatever he is speaking is the truth and he is not a liar.

2. Fight against Evil

Allah says, "And to (the people of) Madyan (We sent) their brother Shu'aib. He said, "O my people, worship Allah; you have no deity other than Him. There has come to you clear evidence from your Lord. So, fulfil the measure and weight and do not deprive people of their due and cause not corruption upon the earth after its reformation. That is better for you, if you should be believers" (Qur'an 7:85).

"And to Madyan (We sent) their brother Shu'aib. He said, "O my people, worship Allah; you have no deity other than Him. And do not decrease from the measure and the scale. Indeed, I see you in prosperity, but indeed, I fear for you the punishment of an all-encompassing Day. And O my people, give full measure and weight in justice and do not deprive the people of their due and do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption" (Qur'an 11:84-85).

"Give full measure and do not be of those who cause loss. And weigh with an even (i.e., honest) balance. And do not deprive people of their due and do not commit abuse on earth, spreading corruption" (Qur'an 26:181-183).

"And to Madyan (We sent) their brother Shu'aib, and he said, "O my people, worship Allah and expect the Last Day and do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption" (Qur'an 29:36).

Conclusion

Prophet Shu'aib was a Prophet. He was a leader who would rely upon Allah, was a trustworthy man and strived to stop evil. He preached and asked them to be mindful of Allah's favours and warning them of the consequences of their evil ways. He remained calm as he reminded them of his kinship. What he was doing was not for his personal gain.

Prophet Yusuf

Introduction

The life of Prophet Yusuf is a unique one among the stories of Prophets in the Qur'an. Prophet Yusuf was the son of Yaqub, grandson of Ishaq and the great-grandson of Prophet Ibrahim. The uniqueness of his story is that it is the only story of a Prophet that is told in entirety in a single chapter in the Qur'an, chapter Yusuf, chapter number 12. The chapter was revealed in the last part of the Makkan period of Prophet Muhammad, where people were making plots to kill him. The central theme of the chapter is to bring into focus the unblemished life and character of Prophet Yusuf, his Dawah is presented. Plans of Allah effectively counters their mischievous activities and scheming.

Problems encountered by Prophet Muhammad, were already faced by Prophet Yusuf. The chapter is also to console him, to strengthen him and to train him for future.

The brothers of Prophet Yusuf tried to kill him; the people of Mecca also tried to kill Prophet Muhammad. Prophet Yusuf forgave his brothers; Prophet Muhammad also forgave the people of Mecca after the conquest of Mecca.

This is the most detailed and fascinating story in the Qur'an. It depicts human weaknesses such as jealousy, hatred, pride, passion, deception, intrigue and cruelty. It also mentions noble qualities such as patience, loyalty, bravery, nobility, and compassion. We learn about troubles and sorrows of Yusuf, and move with him through the years of his life. He is a man of piety and patience, and in the end emerges victorious.

Yusuf is revered for his noble character. When Prophet Muhammad was asked who is the most honorable in Allah's sight, Prophet said, "... Yusuf, Allah's Prophet, the son of Allah's Prophet, the son of Allah's Prophet, the son of Allah's Khalil (i.e. Ibrahim)" (Bukhari).

Yusuf as young boy lived in the house with his younger brother Binyamin and 10 older half-brothers. Yusuf excelled his brothers as the sun outshines the stars. It was his excellence that gave his half-brothers cause for envy and enmity. It was clear to his brothers that he was dearer to their father than themselves. As a prophet, Yaqub naturally recognized the excellence of Yusuf and his spiritual gifts and hence he cherished him like a treasure.

Allah says in the Qur'an, "And the king said, "Bring him to me; I will appoint him exclusively for myself". And when he spoke to him, he said, "Indeed, you are today established (in position) and trusted". (Yusuf) said, "Appoint me over the storehouses of the land. Indeed, I will be a knowing guardian". And thus, We established Yusuf in the land to settle therein wherever he willed. We touch with Our mercy whom We will, and We do not allow to be lost the reward of those who do good" (Qur'an 12:54-56).

We learn from the Qur'an that the king of Egypt informed Yusuf that his innocence was established and invited him to the palace. The king recognized his noble qualities. When Yusuf came, the king talked to him. Yusuf's replies astonished the king with his cultural refinement and wide knowledge. Then the conversation turned to the dream. Prophet Yusuf advised the king to start planning for years of famine ahead. He informed him that the famine would affect not only Egypt but the neighbouring countries as well. The king offered him a high position. Yusuf asked to be made controller of the granaries, so that he could guard the nation's harvest and thereby safeguard it during the anticipated drought. Yusuf wanted to rescue nation for a period of seven years. It was a nobleness on his part.

Qualities

The following are the leadership qualities in the life of Prophet Yusuf:

1. Wisdom

Allah says, "And when Joseph reached maturity, We gave him wisdom and knowledge. And thus, We reward the doers of good" (Qur'an 12:22). Wisdom means the ability to take a decision. Yusuf was given wisdom of affairs. This quality was bestowed on Yusuf when he became mature, prior to attaining Prophethood. This was the immediate reward from his Lord for his righteous life. Wisdom brings together experience, humility, knowledge, responsibility, accountability, intuition and strategic vision. As a leader, one should have wisdom, to understand the situation and make effective judgements.

Allah blessed Prophet Yusuf with wisdom. He was given the art of conversation. He was given nobility and self-restraint, which made him an irresistible personality. The king of Egypt soon knew that Allah had graced him with Yusuf. He understood that Yusuf was the most honest, straightforward and noble person, he had met in his life.

2. Knowledge

Yusuf was given knowledge of life and its conditions. This quality was also bestowed on Yusuf when he became mature, prior to attaining Prophethood. This was the immediate reward from his Lord for his righteous life.

Prophet Yusuf tells the king that he has knowledge of the task which is ahead of him. The task ahead is 'crisis management', and Prophet Yusuf knew how to execute it. As a leader, one should possess in-depth knowledge of affairs.

3. Faith in Allah

Prophet Yusuf had strong faith in Allah, which helped him to stay away from sin. Allah says in the Qur'an, "And she, in whose house he was, sought to seduce him. She closed the doors and said, "Come, you". He said, "(I seek) the refuge of Allah. Indeed, he is my master, who has made good my residence. Indeed, wrongdoers will not succeed"" (Qur'an 12:23). His response to the situation is recorded in the Qur'an, which can be divided into three parts. The first part is, "I seek refuge in Allah", which expressed the fear of Allah, the second part is, "Indeed, he is my master, who has made good my residence", which is an expression of gratitude to Allah, and the third part is, "Indeed, wrongdoers will not succeed", which expresses the belief in the reward and punishment in the Hereafter.

Wife of Aziz told him that he would be imprisoned and would be disgraced. The response of Yusuf to this situation is recorded in the Qur'an. "He said, "My Lord, prison is more to my liking than that to which they invite me. And if You do not avert from me their plan, I might incline toward them and (thus) be of the ignorant"" (Qur'an 12:33). We can see from this statement that Yusuf was not proud of his chastity, he considered it as a favour of Allah, and that is why at such a delicate moment, he sought the help of Allah. As a leader, one should have strong faith in Allah, so that he does not get afraid.

4. Righteousness

Allah says, "And there entered the prison with him two young men. One of them said, "Indeed, I have seen myself (in a dream) pressing wine". The other said, "Indeed, I have seen myself carrying upon my head (some) bread, from which the birds were eating. Inform us of its interpretation; indeed, we see you to be of those who do good"" (Qur'an 12:36). The fact that two prisoners attested to his

righteousness shows that Prophet Yusuf was held in high esteem in the prison.

5. Man of Truth

Qur'an reports: "(He said), "Yusuf, O man of truth, explain to us about seven fat cows eaten by seven (that were) lean, and seven green spikes (of grain) and others (that were) dry, that I may return to the people; perhaps they will know (about you)"'" (Qur'an 12:46). The Arabic word 'Siddiq' is used for the one who is an embodiment of truth and righteousness. The butler (wine-servant) went to the person with the permission of the king. It shows that the butler (wine-servant) had been so deeply impressed with the pure character of Prophet Yusuf that even years had failed to blot it from his heart. As a leader, one should be truthful, so that people would trust him.

Qur'an reports: "And the king said, "Bring him to me; I will appoint him exclusively for myself" And when he spoke to him, he said, "Indeed, you are today established (in position) and trusted" (Qur'an 12:54). The king called Prophet Yusuf and declared that from then onwards Yusuf would be entrusted with authority. The king was immensely impressed by him. He expressed his full trust and confidence in him. Prophet Yusuf was worthy of adorning the highest office in the land.

Qur'an reports: "(Yusuf) said, "Appoint me over the storehouses of the land. Indeed, I will be a knowing guardian'"'" (Qur'an 12:55). Prophet Yusuf told the king, to entrust him with the responsibility, as he possesses the quality of a guardian. During the time of crisis, the leader should know how to guard resources.

Prophet Yusuf was confident that he would do justice to the position as he had necessary knowledge. Prophet Yusuf also knew that there was no other man beside him who could undertake this responsibility. Therefore, he demanded power only to please Allah and serve the people.

6. Foresight

Prophet Yusuf offered himself for the responsibility because he knew that no other man beside him could undertake this responsibility, and he also had the necessary qualification for the job. The situation demanded it, so he offered himself to the office. Prophet Yusuf demanded powers necessary to meet the situation. Prophet Yusuf took up the responsibility, to establish truth, so that justice may prevail and right may become powerful.

7. Nobility

Qur'an reports: "And (Yusuf) said to his servants, 'Put their merchandise into their saddlebags so they might recognize it when they have gone back to their people that perhaps they will (again) return" (Qur'an 12:62). Prophet Yusuf ordered to put back the price which they had paid for the food grains back into their saddlebags, so that the amount would help his brothers and his parents and would help them overcome their financial difficulties. Prophet Yusuf could have taken revenge as they had put him in the well in his childhood, but he returned their bad act with a good deed, by helping them and ignoring the past. As a leader, one should not take revenge, but should do good.

Qur'an reports: "They said, "If he steals, a brother of his has stolen before". But Yusuf kept it within himself and did not reveal it to them. He said, "You are worse in position, and Allah is most knowing of what you describe"" (Qur'an 12:77). After the royal cup was found with Bin Yamin, the step brothers could not immediately give a reply, so they started accusing his full brother Prophet Yusuf of being a thief. After listening to the statement of his brothers, Prophet Yusuf could have revealed their mistake, but he just kept quiet. As a leader, one should try to be calm, and not reveal the mistakes of others.

8. Crisis Management

Crisis management is the process by which a nation or organization deals with a disruptive and unexpected event that threatens to harm the organization. Crisis management is situation-based. Proper response shall include action in the following areas, crisis prevention, crisis assessment, crisis handling and crisis termination. The aim of crisis management is to be well prepared for crisis, ensure a rapid and adequate response, maintain clear lines of reporting and communication. The following are the various activities which Prophet Yusuf focused on to manage the crisis:

i. Effective Utilisation of Resources

Prophet Yusuf ordered the Egyptians to plant, as Egypt has human, environmental and climatic factors, the Nile River and fertilized soil for successful agriculture and good yield of crops. Allah also says in the Qur'an, "And Firon called out among his people; he said, "O my people, does not the kingdom of Egypt belong to me, and these rivers flowing beneath me; then do you not see" (Qur'an 43:51). The verse also talks about resources available in Egypt.

ii. Increasing Agriculture Production

Prophet Yusuf managed to increase agricultural production and Egypt became the store of grains in the area, because efficient leadership of Prophet Yusuf. Prophet Yusuf inspired people to put in hard and active work.

iii. Storage of Goods

Prophet Yusuf managed to store crops by using the best ways to protect it from worms, humidity and germination. He ordered to leave wheat in its shell and build underground silos to store it. "... and what you harvest leave in its spikes, except a little from which you will eat" (Qur'an 12:47). The Qur'an records the command of Prophet Yusuf to leave the

harvest in the spikes and only use what little is required to eat.

iv. Consumption

Prophet Yusuf managed to rationalize consumption or supply. Prophet Yusuf gave a lot of importance on saving food for the drought years.

9. Magnanimity

When Yusuf finally confronts his brothers later in life, it is a beautiful lesson of forgiveness. After Binyamin is accused of theft, they return to Yusuf in a great predicament. His brothers are enduring hard times in which they have poor harvest and are in need. On the other hand, Yusuf has not only become the king of Egypt, but he has astutely saved provisions and prepared his community to survive the famine. Although Yusuf has suffered many hardships on account of his brother's jealous plotting, Yusuf is strong and holds the upper hand. Instead of treating them with harshness or rebuking them to endure starvation, Yusuf utters very lovely words, which is recorded in the Qur'an, "He said, "No blame will there be upon you today. Allah will forgive you; and He is the most merciful of the merciful"" (Qur'an 12:92). Instead of being bitter and angry or taking revenge, Yusuf was strong enough to choose forgiveness. With all his power as a leader, Yusuf preferred the sweetness of forgiveness. As a leader, one should have a large heart and should forgive people for their shortcomings.

10. Patience

Allah says, "And he raised his parents upon the throne, and they bowed to him in prostration. And he said, "O my father, this is the explanation of my vision of before. My Lord has made it reality. And He was certainly good to me when He took me out of prison and brought you (here) from bedouin life after Satan had induced (separation) between

me and my brothers. Indeed, my Lord is Subtle in what He wills. Indeed, it is He who is the Knowing, the Wise" (Qur'an 12:100). Prophet Yusuf was patient while awaiting the fulfilment of his dream. His brothers abandoned him in the well. He was sold as a slave. He was put in jail. His fellow inmate was released and forgot about him. Yusuf continued to be patient. As the king of Egypt, Yusuf tolerated his brothers' slander. He kept his cool when they accused his brother Binyamin of stealing. Regardless of the time, situation, place, or scenario, Prophet Yusuf remained patient. As a leader, one should be patient as things do not happen soon and as per his wish.

His brothers plotted to kill him, but he put the blame on Satan that Satan had induced separation between him and his brothers. As a leader, one needs to have a large heart, so that he would not highlight the mistakes of others.

After his acquittal, Yusuf was entrusted as a reliable person with the treasures of the country. He thereupon made his family reunite and told them about his trust in Allah. As a leader, one should praise Allah for solving problems.

11. Gratitude

Yusuf said, "My Lord, You have given me (something) of sovereignty and taught me of the interpretation of dreams. Creator of the heavens and earth, You are my protector in this world and in the Hereafter. Cause me to die a Muslim and join me with the righteous" (Qur'an 12:101). Prophet Yusuf went on to thank Allah for the talent and protection given by Him. This also shows the moral excellence, faith, submission to Allah and loyalty of Prophet Yusuf. Irrespective of the conditions, he never deviated from moral excellence and never gave up his noble attitude. A person who does not thank Allah, will never thank people. As a leader, one should thank Allah for the talent given and bounties showered upon him.

Conclusion

Allah says, "We relate to you, (O Muhammad), the best of stories in what We have revealed to you of this Qur'an although you were, before it, among the unaware" (Qur'an 12:3). The Qur'an uses the word '*aḥsana-l-qaṣaṣi*' (best of stories) for the story of Prophet Yusuf. There might be many reasons for the same and one reason is description of qualities of leadership.

The Qur'an not only instructs people about prayer, fasting and worship, but also explains man's affairs such as behaviour with people and crisis management. From the life of Prophet Yusuf, we can learn leadership qualities like, faith in Allah, patience, knowledge, vision and crises management. The people of Egypt implemented the plan given by Prophet Yusuf which ultimately helped them. They became safe from famine by cultivating the land, saving the rest of crops for the drought years and proper distribution. Finally, Prophet Yusuf was intelligent, knowledgeable leader full of wisdom.

Prophet Ayoub

Introduction

Prophet Ayoub had wealth of all kinds; boats, slaves, sheep, vast lands of Haran. All those favours were taken from him and he was physically afflicted as well. But he glorified Allah time day and night. His disease lasted for a long time. His friends went away and people abstained from visiting him. No one felt sympathy for him except his wife. She took good care of him. (Ibn Asaker)

Prophet Ayoub was a man of Rum. Ibn Asaker narrated that his mother was a daughter of Lut. It was said that his father was one who believed in Ibrahim.

Allah said to Ayoub. "And take in your hand a bunch (of grass) and strike with it and do not break your oath". Indeed, We found him patient, an excellent servant. Indeed, he was one repeatedly turning back (to Allah)" (Qur'an 28:44). In the verse Allah has called Prophet Ayoub as 'an excellent servant'. Prophet Ayoub was always remembering Allah. One of the angels remarked, "The best creature on earth today is Ayoub, a man of noble character who displays great patience and always remembers his Generous Lord. He is an excellent model for the worshippers of Allah. In return, his Lord has blessed him with a long life and plenty of servants, as well as the needy and the poor share in his good fortune; he feeds and clothes the poor and buys slaves to set them free. He makes those who receive his charity feel as if they are favouring him so kind and gentle is he".

Qualities

The following are the leadership qualities in the life of Prophet Ayoub:

1. Self-Awareness

Allah says, "And remember Our servant Ayoub, when he called to his Lord, "Indeed, Satan has touched me with hardship and torment"" (Qur'an 38:41). Prophet Ayoub was very much aware about himself and the problems which he was facing. He was feeling pain for two reasons. First, on account of his illness and the second because of separation from his family. He knew that these sufferings descended on him as a test from Allah. So, Prophet Ayoub prayed to Allah to remove his sufferings.

The affliction of the severity of illness, the loss of property and wealth, and the desertion of the near and dear ones is not so great a torment and trouble for him as the temptation of Satan, who is exploiting the condition to despair him of his Lord and wants that he should become ungrateful to Him and turn desperate and impatient.

2. Patience

When Prophet Ayoub was afflicted with hardships and calamities, he did not complain; he endured the tests and trials set by Him patiently and invoked only Him for help. He did not despair of Allah and did not turn to others for help. He believed that whatever he will get, he will get only from Allah. Therefore, he remained hopeful of His mercy.

3. Trust in Allah

Allah said to Ayoub; "And take in your hand a bunch (of grass) and strike with it and do not break your oath". Indeed, We found him patient, an excellent servant. Indeed, he was one repeatedly turning back (to Allah)" (Qur'an 38:44). When Prophet Ayoub was facing all kinds of problems he remained hopeful of Allah's mercy and turned back to him, no matter how long he might have to suffer the distress. That is why he was honoured and blessed with favours and bounties.

4. Supplication

Allah says, "And (mention) Ayoub, when he called to his Lord, "Indeed, adversity has touched me, and You are the most merciful of the merciful" (Qur'an 21:83). Prophet Ayoub suffered from disease. It was a great trial which he had undergone. Inspite of great suffering he never uttered a word of complaint and was an epitome of patience. The words of the prayer are note-worthy. Prophet Ayoub mentions his distress but does not say anything except, "You are the most Merciful of the Merciful". This is a great proof of his courage and nobility.

Prophet Ayoub's health was restored. Meanwhile, his faithful wife could no longer bear to be parted from her husband and returned to him to beg his forgiveness, desiring to serve him. On entering her house, she was amazed at the sudden change: Prophet Ayoub was again healthy. She thanked Allah for His mercy. Prophet Ayoub was worried, for he had taken an oath to punish her with a hundred strokes if he had regained health but he had no desire to hurt her. Allah advised him, "Take in your hand a bundle of thin grass and strike therewith your wife and break not your oath" (Ibn Kathir).

Conclusion

Ayoub lost his wealth, then his children and then his health, but in all three situations, he remained steadfast. His leadership also features strong faith in Allah, repentance and supplication. He was self-aware and aware of the external environment and a concern for fulfilling the oath. What better example one can expect with respect to leadership!

Prophet Musa

Introduction

There are five distinguished prophets; and Prophet Musa is among them. (Qur'an 42:13)

Prophet Musa was a descendant of Yaqub. He had a unique and tumultuous life. He was born at a time when the Israelites were living in Egypt and when their sons were beheaded by the order of Firon. As per the dream of his mother, she placed Musa, in a wooden box and left him in the river Nile. The water carried the box and reached the place of Firon. Due to the insistence of the queen, Firon decided not to kill the child. Since they did not have a son, they adopted him as their own son and put him under the care of a nurse (who was incidentally Musa's own mother).

Up to the early stages of his youth, Musa lived in the palace of Firon. Then, after an accidental murder, fearing Firon, he ran away from Egypt. He went to Madyan and met Shuayb. He married one of daughters of Shuayb and grazed his sheep for a few years. After a few years, he took his wife with him, and set out for Egypt. On his way, he reached Mount Sinai at night. He was assigned to prophetic mission by Allah. He was chosen by Allah to invite Firon to the religion of oneness of God, to liberate the Bani Israel from Firon's oppression. He also took the support of his brother Haroon, in his mission.

He announced his mission and communicated the divine message. Firon did not accept the message of Prophet Musa and refused to grant freedom to Bani Israel. Although for many years Prophet Musa invited people to oneness of God and showed many miracles, Firon and his people showed no reaction other than toughness. Finally, by the

order of Allah, Prophet Musa emigrated with Bani Israel and went from Egypt to Sinai desert. When they reached the Red sea, Firon too came to know and chased them with his army. Through a miracle, Prophet Musa split the water of the sea and crossed it along with his people, but Firon and his army were drowned. After this event, Allah revealed the book 'Tawrat' to Prophet Musa and established the Shariah of Prophet Musa among Bani Israel.

Prophet Musa is the most frequently mentioned prophet in the Qur'an. Allah spoke to him directly. Soon after attaining Prophethood, Prophet Musa started spreading the message of monotheism to the people of Egypt. The biggest challenge of Prophet Musa was to go the Firon's palace and invite him to Islam. During his journey as a prophet, Prophet Musa displayed a lot of leadership skills which can be understood as qualities of a leader.

Lessons of leadership from the life of Prophet Musa are very relevant. The life of Prophet Musa has similarity with the current situation which is prevailing in India and the world at large. For example, Firon, Haman and Qarun were prominent at the time of Prophet Musa; we also find them today, Firon in the form of unjust rulers, Haman in the form of Media and Think Tanks and Qarun in the form of World Bank and IMF.

Firon claimed to be god; today many claim to be god. Bani Israel indulged in astrology, today astrology is practiced and is growing dramatically. Bani Israel used to worship snake, today snake worship is practiced. Sorcery was practiced; today it is performed in the name of Black Magic. Bani Israel were argumentative. They were commanded by Allah to sacrifice a cow; some people are argumentative today. Even after presenting the truth with clear justifications and proofs. Bani Israel were ungrateful. In spite of getting 'Manna and Salwa', they demanded onion, garlic, pulses; today also many are ungrateful to Allah.

The miracle was shown to Firon but still he did not believe. Today people are shown the biggest miracle, the Qur'an, but they fail to understand and take heed. Firon intended to uproot Prophet Musa and the Bani Israel; today people are trying to uproot Muslims from various countries. Samri fooled people and took them for a ride, today many so-called spiritual gurus are taking people for a ride. The Bani Israel were lazy, ignorant, quarrelsome and disobedient. They lacked courage and determination; today some people also have the same behaviour.

Allah says, "And mention in the Book, Prophet Musa. Indeed, he was chosen, and he was a Messenger and a prophet" (Qur'an 19:51).

Qualities

The following are the leadership qualities in the life of Prophet Musa:

1. Wisdom

Allah says, "And when he attained his full strength and was mature, We bestowed upon him judgement and knowledge. And thus, do We reward the doers of good" (Qur'an 28:14). 'Huk'man' implies wisdom, understanding, and power of judgment. Thus, he became a distinctive personality in Egypt, on account of his wisdom. Wisdom is the best reward from Allah that can be granted to any person in this world. Those would live righteously and perform good deeds; Allah rewards them according to their capacity.

Musa recalled; "So I fled from you when I feared you. Then my Lord granted me wisdom and Prophethood and appointed me (as one) of the Messengers" (Qur'an 26:21).

2. Knowledge

Ilm means knowledge. Musa became familiar with the teachings of his forefathers; Yusuf, Yaqub, Ishaq and Ibrahim through his contact with his parents. He learnt skill

prevalent in Egypt by virtue of his training as a prince in the king's palace. He also got opportunity to observe Bani Israil as well as Firon.

3. Courage

Allah says, "And he entered the city at a time of inattention by its people and found therein two men fighting, one from his faction and one from among his enemy. And the one from his faction called for help to him against the one from his enemy, so Musa struck him and (unintentionally) killed him. (Musa) said, "This is from the work of Satan. Indeed, he is a manifest, misleading enemy"" (Qur'an 28:15). One day in the main city, he saw two men fighting. One was an Israelite, who was being beaten by the other, an Egyptian. On seeing Prophet Musa, the Israelite asked for help. Prophet Musa went ahead to help the victim. He struck a heavy blow on the Egyptian, who died on the spot. Upon realizing that he had killed a human being, Prophet Musa's heart was filled with deep sorrow.

4. Repentance

Musa said, "My Lord, indeed I have wronged myself, so forgive me", and He forgave him. Indeed, He is the Forgiving, the Merciful" (Qur'an 28:16). After realising one's mistake, one should not remain stubborn, but should seek forgiveness from Allah, and that is what Musa did.

Musa said, "My Lord, for the favour You bestowed upon me, I will never be an assistant to the criminals"" (Qur'an 28:17). Musa acknowledged Allah's favours. By favour it means guidance from Allah which motivated Musa to seek forgiveness immediately.

On another occasion, Allah says, "And when Musa returned to his people, angry and grieved, he said, "How wretched is that by which you have replaced me after (my departure). Were you impatient over the matter of your Lord?" And he threw down the tablets and seized his brother

by (the hair of) his head, pulling him toward him. (Haroon) said, "O son of my mother, indeed the people oppressed me and were about to kill me, so let not the enemies rejoice over me and do not place me among the wrongdoing people". (Musa) said, "My Lord, forgive me and my brother and admit us into Your mercy, for You are the most merciful of the merciful" (Qur'an 7:150-151). When Prophet Musa came back from the mountain, he saw that people had indulged themselves in wrong acts of worship. After seeing this Prophet Musa got angry and threw the tablets given by Allah, visited his anger on Haroon, but later he regretted his anger and asked for forgiveness from Allah.

5. Precaution

Allah says, "Then (next) morning he entered the city in fear and cautious, then, the very man whom he had helped the day before, cried to him again for help. Truly, said Musa, "You are clearly a senseless man"" (Qur'an 28:18). With the fear of being arrested and being tried for murder, Musa entered the city. Then the same Israelite who had called for help earlier was quarrelling with another Egyptian and called Musa for help. Musa realized that this man was quarrelsome and therefore, he did not go ahead as before and admonished him.

6. Compassion

Allah says, "And when he directed himself toward Madyan, he said, "Perhaps my Lord will guide me to the sound way". And when he came to the water (i.e., well) of Madyan, he found there a crowd of people watering (their flocks), and he found aside from them two women driving back (their flocks). He said, "What is your circumstance?" They said, "We do not water until the shepherd's dispatch (their flocks); and our father is an old man". So, he watered (their flocks) for them; then he went back to the shade and

said, "My Lord, indeed I am, for whatever good You would send down to me, in need"" (Qur'an 28: 22-24).

Musa left Egypt and crossed the main desert. When Musa reached Madyan, he sat under a tree to rest. He suffered from hunger and fatigue. He was taking rest near a well where a few shepherds were watering their sheep. He noticed two young women waiting to water their sheep. Musa sensed that women were in need of help. Forgetting his thirst, he asked them about their problem. He helped the young women to water their sheep.

7. Supplication

Allah says, "So he left it, fearful and anticipating (apprehension). He said, "My Lord, save me from the wrongdoing people"" (Qur'an 28:21). The government of Firon wanted to kill Musa as a punishment for the killing of a person by mistake. In this scenario, Prophet Musa supplicated to Allah to save him.

Allah says, "And when he directed himself toward Madyan, he said, "Perhaps my Lord will guide me to the sound way"" (Qur'an 28:22). Musa killed a person by mistake, he decided to migrate. Madyan was situated on the eastern bank of the Gulf of Aqba at a distance of eight days. Since this place was outside the kingdom of Firon, Musa turned towards it. He was confident that Allah would guide him. Allah blessed him with his favour, and he reached Madyan directly.

8. Strength

Qur'an reports, "One of the women said, "O my father, hire him. Indeed, the best one you can hire is the strong and the trustworthy"" (Qur'an 28:26). When Musa helped women fetch water from the well, they returned home earlier than usual, which surprised their father. They related the incident. Their father invited the stranger home. Musa welcomed this invitation and accompanied the maiden to her

father. It is at that point of time when one daughter told their father about his quality of being strong, and because of that, he should be employed.

9. Integrity

Qur'an reports; "One of the women said, "O my father, hire him. Indeed, the best one you can hire is the strong and the trustworthy"" (Qur'an 28:26). When the women came back to their home, they told their father about the two qualities of Musa. He was 'strong' and 'trustworthy'.

Musa told Firon; "Render to me the servants of Allah. Indeed, I am to you a trustworthy Messenger"" (Qur'an 44:18). This is a statement by Prophet Musa, where he declares that he is trustworthy. He conveys Allah's message exactly as it is. Prophet is telling people that he is a reliable Messenger. He does not forge anything from himself.

Father of the woman said, "Indeed, I wish to wed you one of these, my two daughters, on (the condition) that you serve me for eight years; but if you complete ten, it will be (as a favour) from you. And I do not wish to put you in difficulty. You will find me, if Allah wills, from among the righteous". (Musa) said, "That is (established) between me and you. Whichever of the two terms I complete - there is no injustice to me, and Allah, over what we say, is Witness". And when Musa had completed the term ..." (Qur'an 28:27-29). Prophet Musa had a contract with the father of the women. He continued to stay with them till the period was complete and only left them when the term was fulfilled.

10. Clarity of Mission

Allah says in the Qur'an, "Indeed, I am Allah. There is no deity except Me, so worship Me and establish prayer for My remembrance" (Qur'an 20:14). This is a conversation between Allah and Musa. After Prophet Musa attained Prophethood, he was given his mission, he was told to

worship Allah alone and to establish prayer, in order to remember Allah.

Allah said, “Go to Firon. Indeed, he has transgressed”” (Qur'an 20:24). Firon is the title of Egyptian kings. Firon transgressed by declaring himself independent and claimed to be Lord instead of acknowledging himself as a slave of Allah. All his rule and administration were based on rebellion against Allah. He had adopted a very tyrannical attitude towards his fellow-beings and was causing untold miseries to the Bani Israel. In this scenario, Allah gave a task to Prophet Musa, to go to Firon and speak the truth, and to communicate the message of Islam.

Allah says, “Musa said, “My Lord, indeed I fear that they will deny me”” (Qur'an 26:12). Allah also says, “And my brother Haroon is more fluent than me in tongue, so send him with me as support, verifying me. Indeed, I fear that they will deny me” (Qur'an 28:34). Prophet Musa was given the task to go to Firon and ask him to worship Allah. He was apprehensive that would not accept his message.

Allah said, ““Go to Firon. Indeed, he has transgressed (i.e., tyrannized). (Musa) said, “My Lord, expand (i.e., relax) for me my breast (with assurance), And ease for me my task” (Qur'an 20:24-25). As soon as Prophet Musa was given the task to go to Firon and invite him to Islam, Musa asked Allah for his help. He asked for Allah's help to enhance his capabilities and enable him to succeed in completing the assigned task. His appeal for help represents the hallmark of humility.

11. Self-Awareness

Allah says, “(Musa) said, “My Lord, expand (i.e., relax) for me my breast (with assurance), and ease for me my task, and untie the knot from my tongue, that they may understand my speech. And appoint for me a minister (i.e., assistant) from my family, Aaron, my brother. Increase through him my strength and let him share my task” (Qur'an 20:25-32).

“And that my breast will tighten and my tongue will not be fluent so send for Haroon” (Qur'an 26:13). “And my brother Haroon is more fluent than me in tongue, so send him with me as support, verifying me. Indeed, I fear that they will deny me” (Qur'an 28:34).

Prophet Musa mentioned the skills required for the job, recognized his limitations that his speech may not be adequate. It is critical for the success of a mission to understand the skills needed. One should identify one's own strengths and weaknesses in the context of the mission. Mature leaders do not shy away from confronting their limitations. Musa recognised that his communication skills were not very effective, so he asked Allah's help to overcome the difficulty.

12. Communication

The communication of Prophet Musa is recorded in the Qur'an, in chapter number 26. In the discussion, Firon reminded him about his favour, tried to threaten him by telling him about imprisonment and also passed sarcastic remarks. Prophet Musa did not lose his temper but emphasized his point, used rational arguments and completed the dialogue effectively by asking him to believe in the lord of the east and the west. The main task in communication is to ensure that the audience opposite understands the message.

13. Delegation

Allah says, “And We made an appointment with Musa for thirty nights and perfected them by (the addition of) ten; so, the term of his Lord was completed as forty nights. And Musa said to his brother Haroon, “Take my place among my people, do right (by them), and do not follow the way of the corrupters” (Qur'an 7:142).

From this verse we can learn that Prophet Musa delegated his responsibility to his brother Prophet Haroon,

when Allah asked him to come to the mountain. Prophet Musa illustrated three important aspects of effective delegation in this case. Firstly, he delegated broadly but clearly by charging Haroon to act for him amongst his people. Secondly, he clarified his expectation, the intended objective by asking Haroon to do right. Thirdly, he placed appropriate limits on the delegated authority by asking Haroon not to follow the way of those who do mischief as there were a few corrupt people among the community.

14. Accountability

Allah says, “And when Musa returned to his people, angry and grieved, he said, “How wretched is that by which you have replaced me after (my departure). Were you impatient over the matter of your Lord?” And he threw down the tablets and seized his brother by (the hair of) his head, pulling him toward him. (Haroon) said, ‘O son of my mother, indeed the people oppressed me and were about to kill me, so let not the enemies rejoice over me and do not place me among the wrongdoing people” (Qur'an 7:150).

When Prophet Musa returned from the mountain, he saw his people singing and dancing around the calf statue. Furious at their senseless ritual, he flung down the Tablet of the Law he was carrying for them. He pulled Haroon's beard and his hair as he held him accountable for what had happened.

Allah says, “(Musa) said, “My Lord, forgive me and my brother and admit us into Your mercy, for You are the most merciful of the merciful” (Qur'an 7:151). When Prophet Musa returned to his people and found that Haroon had been unable to prevent his people from being misled by Samiri, he was upset. He held Haroon accountable but also assumed the responsibility himself, illustrating one of the most basic rules of delegation that, one can only delegate authority but not responsibility. Ultimately, Prophet Musa took all the

responsibility of what went wrong and asked Allah to forgive them and to admit them in his mercy.

15. Remedial Measures

Allah says, “(Musa) said, “And what is your case, O Samiri” (Qur'an 20:95). When Prophet Musa had gone to the mountain to meet Allah, Samiri caused a rebellion among the people against the legitimately delegated leadership of Haroon and misled them into deviating from the worship of Allah. When Prophet Musa returned, he did not rush to condemn anyone. He gave Samiri an opportunity to explain his action before arriving at the conclusion of expelling him.

Allah says, “And (recall) when Musa said to his people, “O my people, indeed you have wronged yourselves by your taking of the calf (for worship). So, repent to your Creator and kill yourselves. That is best for (all of) you in the sight of your Creator”. Then He accepted your repentance; indeed, He is the Accepting of repentance, the Merciful” (Qur'an 2:54). “And when Musa returned to his people, angry and grieved, he said, “How wretched is that by which you have replaced me after (my departure). Were you impatient over the matter of your Lord?” And he threw down the tablets and seized his brother by (the hair of) his head, pulling him toward him. (Haroon) said, “O son of my mother, indeed the people oppressed me and were about to kill me, so let not the enemies rejoice over me and do not place me among the wrongdoing people”” (Qur'an 7:150).

When Prophet Musa came back from the mountain, he saw that the people have started worshipping the calf. On seeing this, Prophet Musa told the people that what they were doing was wrong and asked them to repent to Allah. Prophet Musa also asked the people as to why they could not be patient. From this we learn that, a leader should always try to correct people and instruct them to do right when they commit a mistake.

16. Guidance

Allah says, "Said Musa to his people, "Seek help through Allah and be patient. Indeed, the earth belongs to Allah. He causes to inherit it whom He wills of His servants. And the (best) outcome is for the righteous" (Qur'an 7:128). When the Bani Israel were persecuted. Prophet Musa advised his people that they should not get afraid. They should have strong faith in Allah and should be patient. Musa tells them to be righteous. The land belongs to Allah alone and he would decide, as to who would stay there. This shows that a leader should act as a guide and should guide the followers as to what they need to do.

Allah says, "And (recall) when Musa prayed for water for his people, so We said, "Strike with your staff the stone". And there gushed forth from it twelve springs, and every people knew its watering place. "Eat and drink from the provision of Allah, and do not commit abuse on the earth, spreading corruption."'" (Qur'an 2:60).

When the people asked for water, then Prophet Musa prayed to Allah for water and then Allah provided twelve springs from which water gushed from the rock. There were twelve tribes in Bani Israel, and Allah provided them with twelve springs, so that each tribe can use one spring, and there would not be any dispute. This shows that a leader should strive to fulfil the needs of the people and should also pray to Allah, so that their needs are fulfilled.

17. Desire to Learn

Musa realised that he was not the most knowledgeable person on the earth. Musa asked Allah the identity of learned man. He would like to meet him and learn from him. And when Musa met Khizer he said, "...May I follow you on (the condition) that you teach me from what you have been taught of sound judgement?"'" (Qur'an 18:66). From this verse we learn that one should always be ready to seek knowledge from which ever source possible. A leader should never feel

that he knows everything but should always desire to learn more. He might have become a leader based on certain abilities but that does not mean that he knows everything and should not stop the process of learning.

18. Patience

The following are the various situations where Prophet Musa displayed patience.

i. Immaturity of followers

a) Allah says, "And (recall) when you said, "O Musa, we can never endure one (kind of) food. So, call upon your Lord to bring forth for us from the earth its green herbs and its cucumbers and its garlic and its lentils and its onions". (Musa) said, "Would you exchange what is better for what is less? Go into (any) settlement and indeed, you will have what you have asked". And they were covered with humiliation and poverty and returned with anger from Allah (upon them). That was because they (repeatedly) disbelieved in the signs of Allah and killed the prophets without right. That was because they disobeyed and were (habitually) transgressing" (Qur'an 2:61). Musa kept his patience when his community displayed superficial behaviour.

b) Allah says, "And (recall) when Musa said to his people, "Indeed, Allah commands you to slaughter a cow" They said, "Do you take us in ridicule?" He said, "I seek refuge in Allah from being among the ignorant". They said, "Call upon your Lord to make clear to us what it is". (Musa) said, "(Allah) says, 'It is a cow which is neither old nor virgin, but median between that', so do what you are commanded". They said, "Call upon your Lord to show us what is her color". He said, "He says, 'It is a yellow cow, bright in color – pleasing to the observers'". They said, "Call upon your Lord to make clear to us what it is. Indeed, (all) cows look alike to us. And indeed we, if Allah wills, will be guided". He said, "He says, 'It is a cow neither trained to plow the

earth nor to irrigate the field, one free from fault with no spot upon her”. They said, “Now you have come with the truth”. So, they slaughtered her, but they could hardly do it” (Qur'an 2:67-71). Prophet Musa kept patience even with the most irrelevant queries and answered all their questions.

ii. Arrogance of Followers

Allah says, “And We did certainly give Musa the Torah and followed up after him with Messengers. And We gave Jesus, the son of Mary, clear proofs and supported him with the Pure Spirit. But is it (not) that every time a Messenger came to you, (O Children of Israel), with what your souls did not desire, you were arrogant? And a party (of Messengers) you denied and another party you killed” (Qur'an 2:87). They did not follow Prophet Musa and became arrogant when he presented the message, they also did the same with other prophets and sometimes went to the extent of killing them.

iii. Improper Demand

Allah says, “The People of the Scripture ask you to bring down to them a book from the heaven. But they had asked of Musa (even) greater than that and said, “Show us Allah outright”, so the thunderbolt struck them for their wrongdoing. Then they took the calf (for worship) after clear evidences had come to them, and We pardoned that. And We gave Musa a clear authority” (Qur'an 4:153). Prophet Musa kept his patience when improper demand, was made.

iv. Disobedience

Allah says, “They said, “O Musa, indeed we will not enter it, ever, as long as they are within it; so, go, you and your Lord, and fight. Indeed, we are remaining right here”” (Qur'an 5:24). When Prophet Musa invited them to come and participate in the fight, they did not do so; he kept his patience and continued his efforts of reform.

v. Threat

Allah says, "And Firon said, "Let me kill Musa and let him call upon his Lord. Indeed, I fear that he will change your religion or that he will cause corruption in the land". But Musa said, "Indeed, I have sought refuge in my Lord and your Lord from every arrogant one who does not believe in the Day of Account" (Qur'an 40:26-27). When Firon threatened to kill him, Prophet Musa was not afraid; he kept his patience and put his full trust in Allah.

Conclusion

The life of Prophet Musa offers us valuable lessons in leadership. When Allah appoints someone as a leader, He also gives them all the support required to accomplish their task. We can understand this from the Qur'an. Allah says, "Then We sent Musa and his brother Haroon with Our signs and a clear authority" (Qur'an 23:45). "(Allah) said, "No, go both of you with Our signs; indeed, We are with you, listening" (Qur'an 26:15). Allah asks both of them to go ahead as they have the signs with them and Allah also gave them confidence by telling them that He is with them, always listening to them. This statement gave both Prophets confidence.

"(Allah) said, "You have been granted your request, O Musa" (Qur'an 20:36). When Prophet Musa asked for help from Allah to remove the impediment in his speech. Allah accepted his supplication and provided him with what he asked for. He was able to deliver very fluent speeches. His speeches which are recorded in the Qur'an are masterpieces of eloquence and rhetoric. Allah also says in the Qur'an, "And We had certainly given Musa the Scripture and appointed with him his brother Haroon as an assistant" (Qur'an 25:35). As Allah says in the Qur'an, "And Allah will surely support those who support Him (i.e., His cause). Indeed, Allah is Powerful and Exalted in Might" (Qur'an 22:40).

The lesson which we derive from the life of Prophet Musa is important. When Prophet Muhammad went on the journey of Meraj, it was Prophet Musa who suggested that Prophet Muhammad to go back to Allah and request to reduce the Salah from 50 to 5 times. Prophet Musa also knew that the Muslim community of Prophet Muhammad will not be able to bear it. Thus, lessons of leadership can be derived from the life of Prophet Musa.

Prophet Haroon.

Introduction

Prophet Haroon was the brother of Prophet Musa. When Prophet Musa first confronted the Egyptian king about Israelites, Prophet Haroon served as his brother's companion. Prophet Musa went to Mount Sinai when Allah called him. He delegated his authority to Prophet Haroon.

“(Allah) said, “We will strengthen your arm through your brother and grant you both supremacy so they will not reach you. (It will be) through Our signs; you and those who follow you will be the predominant”” (Qur'an 28:35). This is a reply by Allah, to the supplication of Prophet Musa, where he requested Allah to send his brother Haroon for his help and support. Allah accepted his supplication and said that Allah would strengthen his arm by sending Haroon along with him and they would be victorious.

Allah says, “And We did certainly confer favour upon Musa and Haroon” (Qur'an 37:114). From the verse we can learn that Allah had bestowed a number of favours on Haroon, by making him a Prophet and by giving him the ability to speak in an effective manner.

Qualities

The following are the leadership qualities in the life of Prophet Haroon:

1. Effective Communication

Musa said “And my brother Haroon is more fluent than me in tongue, so send him with me as support, verifying me. Indeed, I fear that they will deny me” (Qur'an 28:34). One of the important things to convey the message is the ability

to communicate effectively. Prophet Haroon was a pious person and was also distinguished in delivering a speech and effective sermonizing. So, Prophet Musa requested Allah to associate his brother along with him for the task assigned to him.

2. Reasoning

Allah says, "And Haroon had already told them before (the return of Musa), "O my people, you are only being tested by it, and indeed, your Lord is the Most Merciful, so follow me and obey my order" (Qur'an 20:90). Prophet Haroon acted as a leader in the absence of Prophet Musa. He told his people that they have been deceived and Allah is Most Beneficent.

3. Assistance

Allah says, "And when Musa returned to his people, angry and grieved, he said, "How wretched is that by which you have replaced me after (my departure). Were you impatient over the matter of your Lord?" And he threw down the tablets and seized his brother by (the hair of) his head, pulling him toward him. (Haroon) said, "O son of my mother, indeed the people oppressed me and were about to kill me, so let not the enemies rejoice over me and do not place me among the wrongdoing people"" (Qur'an 7:150). "(Haroon) said, "O son of my mother, do not seize (me) by my beard or by my head. Indeed, I feared that you would say, 'You caused division among the Children of Israel, and you did not observe (or await) my word'" (Qur'an 20:94).

Prophet Haroon did his best to stop people from committing the sin of calf-worship, but they revolted against him and might even have killed him. Fearing a clash between them, he kept his calm and waited for Prophet Musa for his return. He was apprehensive that Musa would blame him for letting the situation worsen and failing to control it effectively in his absence.

4. Farsightedness

Prophet Haroon saw that a large number of people had been influenced by Samri. The love of the calf had seized them so badly that it was not possible to stop them from worshipping it without applying force. Reformers would be resisted by calf and thus the community would be divided. They would not even hesitate to kill him and if this happened it would be disastrous. When Prophet Musa was to return only in a few days, waiting for him was the proper course. It was the farsightedness of Prophet Haroon that he postponed taking any final decision in the matter.

Conclusion

Prophet Haroon was a pious man. He was a man on whom Allah had bestowed a number of favours. The leadership of Prophet Haroon featured the talent of effective communication, farsightedness and the best performance. He was believing servant of Allah. He helped Prophet Musa in every step and did his best in every task assigned to him. He was with Prophet Musa when he went to meet Firon at his palace. He took charge of things when Prophet Musa went to Mount Sinai on the command of Allah.

Prophet Dhul-Kifl

Introduction

Prophet Dhul-Kifl was a righteous man. He administered justice. Prophet Dhul-Kifl was a saintly man who remained faithful in daily prayer and worship. Allah says, "And remember Ismail, Al-Yasa and Dhul-Kifl, and all are among the outstanding" (Qur'an 38:48). In the Qur'an Prophet Dhul-Kifl is called as 'outstanding'.

Patience

Allah says, "And (mention) Ismail and Idrees and Dhul-Kifl; all were of the patient" (Qur'an 21:85). From the verse we can learn that Prophet Dhul-Kifl was a patient man. The mention of Prophet Dhul-Kifl has been made in the Qur'an among prophets who practiced patience, which gives us an idea that he must have passed through very trying times.

Conclusion

Prophet Dhul-Kifl a saintly man who remained faithful in daily prayer and worship. Prophet Dhul-Kifl was a man of patience and was among the outstanding. He was a leader who executed his task as per the commandment of Allah. He was a righteous man. The Qur'an refers to his high character and rank in the Hereafter.



Prophet Dawood

Introduction

Prophet Dawood was a just and righteous ruler who brought peace and prosperity to his people, and whom Allah honoured as a Messenger. He delivered Allah's message to the people through the precious gift of his melodious voice. When he recited the Zaboor (Psalms), it was as if the rest of creation chanted with him; people listened as if in a trance. The messages delivered by Prophet Dawood are famous and well-remembered. They are known in the Bible as the 'Psalms' or 'Songs of David'. Prophet Dawood is mentioned in 9 places in the Qur'an.

Prophet Dawood divided his working day into four parts: one to earn a living and to rest, one to pray to his Lord, one to listen to the complaints of his people, and the last part to deliver his sermons. He also appointed deputies to listen to his subjects' complaints so that in his absence people's problems might not be neglected. Although a king, he did not live on the income of his kingdom. Being well-experienced in the craft of weapon-making, he made and sold weapons and lived on that income.

Allah says, "(We said), 'O Dawood, indeed We have made you a successor upon the earth, so judge between the people in truth and do not follow (your own) desire, as it will lead you astray from the way of Allah'. Indeed, those who go astray from the way of Allah will have a severe punishment for having forgotten the Day of Account" (Qur'an 38:26). Dawood was given authority so that he would judge between people in truth and would not follow his own desires.

Qualities

The following are leadership qualities in the life of Prophet Dawood:

1. Wisdom

Allah says, "And We strengthened his kingdom and gave him wisdom and discernment in speech" (Qur'an 38:20). From the verse we can learn that Prophet Dawood was given understanding and intelligence, so that he could take the right decisions.

Allah says, "So, they defeated them by permission of Allah, and Dawood killed Jalut, and Allah gave him the kingship and wisdom and taught him from that which He willed. And if it were not for Allah checking (some) people by means of others, the earth would have been corrupted, but Allah is full of bounty to the worlds" (Qur'an 2:251). Wisdom is very much necessary to lead a kingdom. If the people are not ruled with wisdom, then it becomes a tyrannical rule. If ruled with wisdom, then it is a just and fair government. A ruler, by implementing the commands and laws given by Allah, attains the status of vicegerent of Allah. Thus, Allah granted wisdom to Prophet Dawood to lead his kingdom rightly.

2. Speech

Allah says, "And We strengthened his kingdom and gave him wisdom and discernment in speech" (Qur'an 38:20). Prophet Dawood was never ambiguous in speech but clear and forthright. Whatever problem he talked about he would lay bare its basic points and would clearly and precisely determine the real issue under question and would pass a decisive judgment. This quality is not attained by a person unless he is granted wisdom, understanding and mastery of language of the highest degree.

3. Strength

Allah says, "Be patient over what they say and remember Our servant, Dawood, the possessor of strength; indeed, he was one who repeatedly turned back (to Allah)" (Qur'an 38:17). From the verse we can learn that Prophet Dawood had strength. The word 'hand' is used metaphorically for strength and power not only in Arabic but in other languages also. It means that he possessed great powers. These powers may mean the physical strength which he displayed during his combat against Jalut, as well as military and political power by which he defeated the neighbouring idolatrous nations and established a strong Islamic empire.

4. Piety

Allah says, "And to Dawood We gave Sulaiman. An excellent servant, indeed he was one repeatedly turning back (to Allah)" (Qur'an 38:30). From the verse we learn that the attribute of turning towards Allah was present in the character of Prophet Dawood at the highest level. 'Turning towards Allah' refers to turning to Allah in every matter, to repent before Him for one's mistake, and to adopt the path of His worship and obedience. Inspite of having so much power, Prophet Dawood turned towards Allah.

5. Judgement

Allah says, "And (mention) Dawood and Sulaiman, when they judged concerning the field, when the sheep of a people overran it (at night), and We were witness to their judgement. And We gave understanding of the case to Sulaiman, and to each (of them) We gave judgement and knowledge. And We subjected the mountains to exalt (Us), along with Dawood and (also) the birds. And We were doing (that)" (Qur'an 21:78-79). Prophet Dawood was given the ability to make judgements. He was the head of a state and

had to pass judgements. He possessed the ability to make right decisions.

6. Knowledge

Allah says, "And We had certainly given to Dawood and Sulaiman knowledge, and they said, "Praise (is due) to Allah, who has favoured us over many of His believing servants". (Qur'an 27:15). Knowledge is a very basic quality which is found in all Prophets. Allah had bestowed Prophet Dawood with knowledge, so that he was able to make right judgements and lead the state in the right direction.

Prophet Dawood was a man who would praise Allah. When he received power, he took it as a favour from Allah and praised Allah and lived as a grateful slave of Allah. When Prophet Dawood sang hymns in the praise of Allah, in his rich and sweet voice, the mountains echoed back his melodies and the birds also joined him in his praise and the whole scene became charming.

7. Repentance

Allah says, "(Dawood) said, "He has certainly wronged you in demanding your ewe (in addition) to his ewes. And indeed, many associates oppress one another, except for those who believe and do righteous deeds and few are they". And Dawood became certain that We had tried him, and he asked forgiveness of his Lord and fell down bowing (in prostration) and turned in repentance (to Allah)" (Qur'an 38:24): It was a situation where litigants had come to him at an odd hour by the unusual way of jumping over the wall and had also used rather impolite language. Prophet Dawood bore that with patience and gave his judgement in the most proper and just way. He also thought that this episode was a trial for him from Allah. Accordingly, he at once prayed to Allah to forgive him, bowing before Him. He prostrated himself before Him, and turned to Him sincerely.

8. Introspection

Prophet Dawood inspite of being a great ruler, always used to check his own defects. He repented for his mistakes and would seek forgiveness from Allah. When the episode of two litigants occurred, he also remembered his own mistakes on this occasion.

9. Justice

Allah says, “(We said to him), ‘O Dawood, We have appointed you vicegerent on earth. Therefore, rule among people with justice and do not follow (your) desire lest it should lead you astray from Allah’s Path...’” (Qur'an 38:26). The verse talks about Prophet Dawood as successor on the earth. He was to judge among people in truth. After gaining power, a man may not fulfil the demands of justice and truth. He may follow his own wishes and do whatever he likes, right or wrong. Therefore, Allah has directed that decisions of the state be based on truth and justice. Power should not be misused. The same directive holds good for leaders. After gaining power, it should be used on the basis of truth and justice.

10. Worship

Prophet Dawood fasted every other day. Abdullah Ibn Amr Ibn Al-As narrated, Allah’s Messenger said, “The most beloved fasting to Allah was the fasting of Prophet Dawood, who used to fast alternate days. And the most beloved prayer to Allah was the prayer of Dawood, who used to sleep the first half of the night and pray for one third of it and again sleep for a sixth of it” (Bukhari). From this we can learn that Prophet Dawood was a spiritual person and was close to Allah, thus, he would regularly fast and pray in the night.

Abdullah Ibn Amr Ibn Al-As narrated, “The Prophet said, “I have been informed that you pray all the nights and observe fast all the days; is this true?”. I replied: “Yes”. He said, “If you do so, your eyes will be weak and you will get

bored. So fast three days a month, for this will be the fasting of a whole year". I said, "I find myself able to fast more". He said, "Then fast like the fasting of (the Prophet) Dawood who used to fast on alternate days and would not flee on facing the enemy"" (Bukhari). The Messenger of Allah once said, "The most beloved fasting to Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, is the fast of Dawood. He used to fast one day and not the next. And the most beloved prayer to Allah, the Mighty and Sublime, is the prayer of Dawood. He used to sleep half the night, stand for one third of it (in prayer), and sleep for one-sixth of it" (Tirmidhi). Allah likes moderation in prayer and fasting. He wants us to pray and fast in such a manner that we do not go to extremes.

Conclusion

Prophet Dawood was a great leader; he led his kingdom on Islamic principles with physical and moral strength. He always feared Allah and observed the bounds set by Him. His leadership includes great decision making backed by knowledge and wisdom. He was moderate in his approach, would praise Allah, seek his forgiveness, regularly fast and perform prayer during the night. His son Sulaiman, also went on to become a great leader.

Prophet Sulaiman

Introduction

Prophet Sulaiman inherited the dominion of Prophet Dawood. This was not merely material inheritance.

Allah says, "And We had certainly given to Dawood and Sulaiman knowledge, and they said, "Praise (is due) to Allah, who has favoured us over many of His believing servants". And Sulaiman inherited Dawood. He said, "O people, we have been taught the language of birds, and we have been given from all things. Indeed, this is evident bounty". And gathered for Solomon were his soldiers of the jinn and men and birds, and they were (marching) in rows" (Qur'an 27:15-17).

After the death of Prophet Dawood, Prophet Sulaiman became the king. Besides wisdom, Allah had blessed Sulaiman with many abilities. He could command the winds and understand and talk to birds and animals. Allah directed him to teach both men and jinn to mine the earth and extract its minerals to make tools and weapons. He also favored him with a mine of copper, which was a rare metal in those days.

Qualities

The following are the leadership qualities in the life of Prophet Sulaiman:

1. Judgement

Allah says, "And (mention) Dawood and Sulaiman, when they judged concerning the field - when the sheep of a people overran it (at night), and We were witness to their judgement. And We gave understanding of the case to Sulaiman, and to each (of them) We gave judgement and knowledge. And We subjected the mountains to exalt (Us),

along with David and (also) the birds. And We were doing (that)" (Qur'an 21:78-79).

One day Prophet Dawood was sitting, as usual, solving the problems of his people when two men, one of whom had a field, came to him. The owner of the field said, "O dear Prophet, this man's sheep came to my field at night and ate up the grapes and I have come to ask for compensation". Dawood asked the owner of the sheep "Is this true?" He said, "Yes". Dawood said, "I have decided that you give him your sheep in exchange for the field". Sulaiman, to whom Allah had given wisdom in addition to what he had inherited from his father, spoke up and said, "I have another opinion. The owner of the sheep should take the field to cultivate until the grapes grow, while the other man should take the sheep and make use of their wool and milk until his field is repaired. If the grapes grow, and the field returns to its former state, then the field owner should take his field and give back the sheep to their owner". Prophet Dawood responded, "This is a sound judgment. Praise be to Allah for gifting you with wisdom". You are truly Sulaiman the Wise". Sulaiman was young.

2. Knowledge

Knowledge is a very basic quality which is found in all Prophets. Allah had bestowed Prophet Sulaiman with knowledge, so that he was able to make right judgements and lead the state in the right direction.

3. Gratitude

Allah says, "And We had certainly given to Dawood and Sulaiman knowledge, and they said, "Praise (is due) to Allah, who has favoured us over many of His believing servants". (Qur'an 27:15). A leader has reached the position because he possesses certain qualities which are bounties given by Allah. Prophet Sulaiman was a man who would praise Allah, like his father. When he received power, he

took it as a favour from Allah and praised Allah and lived as a grateful slave of Allah.

4. Administration

The army of Prophet Sulaiman was huge, it comprised of men, jinn animals and birds. As it is recorded in the Qur'an, "And gathered for Sulaiman were his soldiers of the jinn and men and birds, and they were (marching) in rows" (Qur'an 27:17). Even after having a huge army Prophet Sulaiman noticed that the bird 'hoopoe' was missing, as it is recorded in the Qur'an, "And he took attendance of the birds and said, "Why do I not see the hoopoe or is he among the absent? I will surely punish him with a severe punishment or slaughter him unless he brings me clear authorization" (Qur'an 27:20-21). Even after having such a huge army, Prophet Sulaiman was successful to identify the bird which was missing. Prophet Sulaiman had a sharp eye sight, and in one glance he was able to identify the member who was missing.

Allah says, "Until, when they came upon the valley of the ants, an ant said, "O ants, enter your dwellings that you not be crushed by Sulaiman and his soldiers while they perceive not". So (Sulaiman) smiled, amused at her speech, and said, "My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favour which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents and to do righteousness of which You approve. And admit me by Your mercy into (the ranks of) Your righteous servants" (Qur'an 27:18-19). From the verse we learn that Prophet Sulaiman was grateful to Allah. He was being grateful because of the various favours bestowed on him and his parents, such as power, authority, talent and resources.

5. Sincerity

Allah says, "So when they came to Sulaiman, he said, "Do you provide me with wealth? But what Allah has given me is better than what He has given you. Rather, it is you

who rejoice in your gift. Return to them, for we will surely come to them with soldiers that they will be powerless to encounter, and we will surely expel them there from in humiliation, and they will be debased." (Qur'an 27:36-37). This statement is not meant to express pride and vanity. What it means is that, I have no desire for your wealth; I only desire that you should believe, or at least submit to a righteous system. If you agree to neither of these alternatives, it is not possible for me to accept the bribes of wealth and leave you free in the matter of a polytheistic and wicked system of life. What my Lord has given me is enough. This clearly shows the focus of Prophet Sulaiman on truth.

6. Repentance

Allah says, "And We certainly tried Solomon and placed on his throne a body; then he returned. He said, "My Lord, forgive me and grant me a kingdom such as will not belong to anyone after me. Indeed, You are the Bestower"" (Qur'an 38:34-35). Allah caused his prophets to pass through various trials so that they might avoid evil and turn to Allah with great devotion and may rise to still higher position.

The apparent meaning of the verse is that Allah had caused a body to be placed on Sulaiman's throne in an extraordinary manner. This might have been a body of a person. When Prophet Sulaiman saw it, he was shocked. He was surprised to find it lifeless and might have wondered how it appeared there. He realised that it was trial from Allah. Perhaps there was some lapse on his part in connection with his duties and Allah decided to warn him. He turned to Allah and prayed for forgiveness. Prophet Sulaiman was a person of high moral character. Inspite of being the ruler of a great kingdom, his humility was such that he would seek for forgiveness from Allah, for his lapses.

Allah says, "And to Dawood We gave Sulaiman. An excellent servant, indeed he was one repeatedly turning back (to Allah)" (Qur'an 38:30).

7. Wisdom

Abu Huraira reported, the Messenger of Allah said, "There were two women, each of whom had a child with her. A wolf came and took one of their children, but the other woman said, 'it has taken your child'. The first woman said, "no, rather, it has taken your child". So, they took their case before Dawood who judged that the living child be given to the older woman, and then both of them went to Sulaiman, the son of Dawood, and told him about the matter. He said, "bring me a knife so I can cut the child into two pieces and distribute it among them". The young lady said, "do not do so", may Allah have mercy on you, because it is her child. Therefore, Sulaiman gave the child to the young lady" (Bukhari). The hadith clearly shows the critical thinking of Prophet Sulaiman.

Conclusion

Prophet Sulaiman was a man who was trained under his father, Prophet Dawood. Prophet Sulaiman was a just leader and his leadership was supported by fairness and justice, which is what attracted people to be loyal to him. He was also mindful of all his subjects and did not overlook the weaker ones under his rule. His leadership was characterized by decision making which involved critical thinking. He would take decisions based on wisdom and knowledge which were bestowed by Allah. He was focused on his task, seeking forgiveness from Allah, turning back to Allah, praising Allah and being grateful to Allah.

Prophet Elyas

Introduction

Prophet Elyas lived among his people, calling them to Allah and abiding by the message and laws of Allah till he passed away. Then dissension rose among them, and events took momentum. Sins increased and the tyrants killed the prophets. It is believed that he came from the family of Prophet Haroon. Prophet Elyas told his people to worship Allah and to leave the worship of Baal, the primary idol of the area. He is believed to be the prophet of the desert. Some scholars believe that Prophet Elyas was sent to preach in Israel. Early commentators believe that he was sent to Baalbek, in Lebanon.

Qualities

The following are the leadership qualities in the life of Prophet Elyas:

1. Righteousness

Allah says, "And Zakariya and Yahya and Isa and Elyas - and all were of the righteous" (Qur'an 6:85). From the verse we can learn that Prophet Elyas was a righteous man. He was a respectable personality and was a person who did good.

Allah says, "Peace upon Elyas". Indeed, We thus reward the doers of good" (Qur'an 37:130-131). Allah would reward people who are doers of good and Prophet Elyas is one of them, who did good during his tenure as a prophet.

2. Believing Servant

Allah says, "Indeed, he was of Our believing servants" (Qur'an 37:132). He is called as 'believing' because he believed in Allah and he is called a 'servant' because he obeyed every command of Allah.

Conclusion

Prophet Elyas was a leader who preached Islam with full zeal and enthusiasm. He has been mentioned with Prophet Zakariya, Prophet Yahya and Prophet Isa in the Qur'an. Prophet Elyas was a believing servant of Allah, righteous and doer of good deeds. He was such a great leader that Allah says, "Peace upon Elyas" (Qur'an 37:130).

Prophet Al-Yasa

Introduction

Prophet Al-Yasa was sent after Prophet Elyas. He lived among his people, calling them to Allah and abiding by the message and laws of Allah. It is said that he was the cousin of Prophet Elyas. Other sources say that he had been hiding with Prophet Elyas in a cave in Mount Qasium to escape from the King of Ba'alabak, and when Prophet Elyas died, Prophet Al-Yasa succeeded him as a prophet among his people.

Qur'an about Prophet Al-Yasa

Qur'an has described Prophet Al-Yasa as follows:

Distinction

Allah says, "And Ismail and Al-Yasa and Yunus and Lut - and all (of them) We preferred over the worlds" (Qur'an 6:86). From the verse we can learn that Prophet Al-Yasa was preferred by Allah over the worlds. It means that he was the chosen one and was preferred over many others.

Allah says, "And remember Ismail Al-Yasa and Dhul-Kifl, and all are among the outstanding" (Qur'an 38:48). From the verse we can learn that Prophet Al-Yasa was an outstanding personality. Prophet Al-Yasa he walked on the path of Allah and sacrificed in the way of Allah.

Conclusion

Prophet Al-Yasa was such a great leader that he is mentioned along with Prophet Ismail, Prophet Yunus, Prophet Lut and Prophet Dhul-Kifl in the Qur'an. He was an outstanding personality and was preferred by Allah over the worlds.

Prophet Yunus

Introduction

The inhabitants of the town of Nineveh were idolaters. Prophet Yunus was sent to teach them the worship of Allah. The people disliked his message. They argued that we and our forefathers have worshipped these gods for many years and no harm has come to us. He warned them that if they kept on with their foolishness, Allah's punishment would soon follow. Instead of fearing Allah, they told Prophet Yunus that they were not afraid of his warning. "Let it happen", they told him. Prophet Yunus was disheartened and left Nineveh, fearing that Allah's anger would soon follow. A fish swallowed Yunus. He repented to Allah and the fish threw him out.

Gradually he regained his strength and found his way back to his town, Nineveh. He was pleasantly surprised to notice the change that had taken place there. The entire population turned out to welcome him. They informed him that they had turned to believe in Allah. Together they led a prayer of thanksgiving to their Merciful Lord.

Ibn Abbas narrated, "The Prophet Muhammad said, "One should not say I am better than Yunus ibn Matta"" (Bukhari). This shows the status of Prophet Yunus.

Qur'an about Prophet Yunus

The following are the aspects, with reference to which the Qur'an has described Prophet Yunus:

1. Distinction

Allah says, "And Ismail and 'Al-Yasa and Yunus and Lut - and all (of them) We preferred over the worlds"

(Qur'an 6:86). Allah says that Prophet Yunus was preferred over the worlds, that he was a chosen one.

2. Gratitude

Allah says, "And (mention) the man of the fish, when he went off in anger and thought that We would not decree (anything) upon him. And he called out within the darkness, "There is no deity except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers"" (Qur'an 21:87). Through what trying times Prophet Yunus had to pass in the belly of the fish is difficult to imagine. Inspite of the very great suffering that he had to undergo, he did not bring a single word of complaint on his lips. On this occasion the appeal that he addressed to Allah is outstanding and full of praise and appreciation of Allah's greatness and might and his own failing. Even inside the fish he raised the voice of oneness of Allah and referred to Allah's excellence.

3. Repentance

When Prophet Yunus was in the belly of the fish, he also admitted his mistake that he left the place without seeking the permission of Allah. This sincerity and selflessness speaks volumes about his greatness.

When Prophet Yunus was in the belly of the fish he recited a few words, "There is no god except You, Immaculate are you, verily I am the wrong-doer". From this recitation the path of his deliverance was thrown open. Yunus was slave of Allah. He worshiped Him only.

4. Patience

Allah says, "He would have remained inside its belly until the Day they are resurrected" (Qur'an 37:144). There was every possibility that Prophet Yunus would remain in the belly of the fish till the day of resurrection. In this situation, Prophet Yunus remained patient, praised Allah and

realized that he was a wrong doer. He sought forgiveness from Allah.

5. Righteousness

Allah says, "And his Lord chose him and made him of the righteous" (Qur'an 68:50). Allah pardoned the lapse of Prophet Yunus, chose him, guided him and made him among the righteous. After Prophet Yunus came out from the belly of the fish, he followed the commandment of Allah, did good acts and was among the righteous. When a man sincerely repents, Allah would not only forgive him but would also make him among the righteous.

Conclusion

Prophet Yunus was a leader who was preferred over the worlds. He was a leader who always praised and glorified Allah all the time. He remained patient when the future was uncertain. He accepted his mistake. Yunus was liberated from the darkness of the belly of the fish to the light of the world. He executed his task in the most effective fashion and proved to be a successful leader. The life of Prophet Yunus is a lesson. One can become great leader even if one has committed mistakes in the past.

Prophet Zakariya

Introduction

The years had taken their toll on Prophet Zakariya. He was old and bent with age. Despite his feebleness, he went on to deliver his sermons. Prophet Zakariya was not wealthy, but he was always ready to help those in need. His one disappointment in life was that he had no children, for his wife was barren. This worried him, for he feared there was no one after him to carry out his work. The people needed a strong leader. Left on their own; they would move away from Allah's teachings.

Qualities

The following are the leadership qualities in the life of Prophet Zakariya:

1. Supplication

Allah says, "At that, Zakariya called upon his Lord, saying, "My Lord, grant me from Yourself a good offspring. Indeed, You are the Hearer of supplication"" (Qur'an 3:38). "When he called to his Lord a private supplication" (Qur'an 19:3). "And (mention) Zakariya, when he called to his Lord, "My Lord, do not leave me alone (with no heir), while you are the best of inheritors". So, We responded to him, and We gave to him Yahya, and amended for him his wife. Indeed, they used to hasten to good deeds and supplicate Us in hope and fear, and they were to Us humbly submissive" (Qur'an 21:89-90). Prophet Zakariya would supplicate to Allah. He supplicated to Allah to grant him a child. The child should be an inheritor of true religion.

2. Patience

Allah says, "He said, "My Lord, how will I have a boy when I have reached old age and my wife is barren?" The angel said, "Such is Allah; He does what He wills"" (Qur'an 3:40). "He said, "My Lord, how will I have a boy when my wife has been barren and I have reached extreme old age?"" (Qur'an 19:8). Prophet Zakariya wanted a child to take his mission forward and would regularly supplicate to Allah, Allah gave him glad tiding of a child. Prophet Zakariya remained patient for a long time.

3. Righteousness

Allah says, "And Zakariya and Yahya and Isa and Elyas - and all were of the righteous" (Qur'an 6:85). Prophet Zakariya was a righteous man and a respectable personality. He would do good deeds and follow the commandments of Allah.

Allah says, "So We responded to him, and We gave to him Yahya; and amended for him his wife. Indeed, they used to hasten to good deeds and supplicate Us in hope and fear, and they were to Us humbly submissive" (Qur'an 21:90).

Vision

Zakariya prayed, "And indeed, I fear the successors after me, and my wife has been barren, so give me from Yourself an heir. Who will inherit me and inherit from the family of Yaqub. And make him, my Lord, pleasing (to You)" (Qur'an 19:5-6). Prophet Zakariya was very much concerned about future leadership. He was apprehensive about lack of religious leadership and guidance with no one qualified to fill in the office. The religious leadership and guidance in Bani Israil was the duty of Bani Lavi tribe. But none appeared to be qualified to take up that high office. For this reason, he was anxious about future. He prayed to Allah for a noble son.

Conclusion

Prophet Zakariya was humbly submissive to Allah, regularly supplicated to Allah with hope and in fear, He displayed great patience, was righteous, would hasten in good deeds and was futuristic. He constantly had an eye on his community and realized that they are not suitable for leadership after him. That was the reason he constantly prayed to Allah to give him a child who can take the mission forward. He displayed great leadership qualities by striving hard to take his mission forward.

Prophet Yahya

Introduction

Prophet Yahya was mature and serious. Most children took delight in torturing animals whereas, he was merciful to them. He fed animals from his food. Prophet Yahya loved reading since childhood.

Allah guided him to read the book. He became the wisest and most knowledgeable man of that time. Allah endowed him with faculty of judgment. He was capable of interpreting the secrets of religion, guiding people to the right path, and warning them against the wrong one. Prophet Yahya reached maturity. His compassion for his parents, people and all creatures, increased greatly. He called people to repent for their sins.

There are a number of traditions about Prophet Yahya. Ibn Asaker related that one time his parents were looking for him and found him at the Jordan river. When they met him, they wept deeply, seeing his great devotion to Allah.

Prophet Yahya found comfort in the open. He ate leaves, herbs, and sometimes locusts. He slept anywhere in the mountains or on the ground. The beasts recognized Prophet Yahya as the prophet who cared for all the creatures, so they left him alone. Prophet Yahya sometimes fed those beasts, out of mercy, from his food. He would spend the night praising Allah for His blessings.

Qualities

The following are leadership qualities in the life of Prophet Yahya:

1. Wisdom

Allah says, “(Allah) said, “O Yahya, take the Scripture with determination”. And We gave him wisdom (while yet) a child” (Qur'an 19:12). Allah blessed him with wisdom from his childhood. The Arabic word ‘hukm’, implies the ability to make decisions, to form right opinions, to interpret the divine law, to solve problems, and it also means authority from Allah to decide affairs.

2. Courage

A conflict took place between Prophet Yahya and the authorities at that time. A tyrant king, Herod Antipas, the ruler of Palestine, was in love with Salome, his brother's daughter. He was planning to marry his beautiful niece. The marriage was encouraged by her mother and by some men of Zion, either out of fear or to gain favour with the King. On hearing the ruler's plan, Prophet Yahya pronounced that such a marriage would be illegitimate. He would not approve it under any circumstance, as it was against the law of the Torah (Ibn Kathir).

3. Concern for Hereafter

Ibn Mubarak stated that Wahb ibn Al-Ward narrated that Prophet Zakariya did not see his son for three days. He found him and said. “My son, I have been searching for you, and you are weeping.” “O father, did you not tell me that between Paradise and Hell is only a span and it will not be crossed except by tears of weepers?” He told him, “Weep then, my son”. Then they wept together. Other narrations say that Yahya said “The dwellers of Paradise are sleepless out of the sweetness of Allah's bounty; that is why the faithful must be sleepless because of Allah's love in their hearts. (Ibn Kathir)

Conclusion

Prophet Yahya was a great leader. He was blessed with leadership qualities from childhood. He also inherited the qualities of his father, Prophet Zakariya. He was an obedient slave of Allah. Prophet Yahya called people to worship Allah. When he reached maturity, his compassion for his parents, as well as for people and all creatures, increased greatly and he called people to repent for their sins.

Prophet Isa

Introduction

There are five distinguished prophets and Isa is among them. (Qur'an 42:13)

The circumstances of his birth were unusual. His mother, Maryam, a pious virgin, was worshipping Allah (in Jerusalem) when the angel Jibrail descended from heavens. He gave her the good tidings of the birth of Isa. Inspite of being virgin, Maryam became pregnant. Isa was born. He spoke to people, while in cradle. He defended his mother against unfair calumnies attributed to her. He also informed the people about his Prophethood and the divine book (Injil), which is confirmed by the Qur'an.

The Jewish priests felt this child Isa was dangerous to their religionsmonopoly. They felt that people would worship Allah alone; displacing baseless Jewish traditions. Consequently, priests would lose their authority over people. Therefore, they accused Mary of misdeed.

Later, Isa proceeded to invite people to Allah revived the Shariah of Prophet Musa. He sent missionaries from among his disciples to the surrounding places. After his call was spread among people, the Jews planned on killing him, but Allah saved him. Jews caught someone else in his place and crucified him.

Qur'an about Prophet Isa

1. Distinction

Allah says, "(And mention) when the angels said, "O Maryam, indeed Allah gives you good tidings of a word from Him, whose name will be the Messiah, Isa, the son of Maryam, highly honoured in this world and the Hereafter

and among those brought near (to Allah)" (Qur'an 3:45). The verse clearly states that Prophet Isa is highly honoured in this world and the Hereafter. Although Prophet Isa would be born without a father, it will bring no blot on his name. He will be illustrious and honourable.

2. Mission

Qur'an declares; "And Allah will teach him writing and wisdom and the Torah and the Gospel" (Qur'an 3:48). Book refer to Shariah and wisdom is the spirit of religion. It was Allah who taught this to Prophet Isa. Shariah is given by Torah and wisdom by Injeel. Prophet Isa was the follower of the Shariah of Prophet Musa. He had not come with a new Shariah. However, he presented the spirit of the religion in a very effective way, while the Bani Israil had made it merely a collection of customs and rituals.

Qualities

The following are the leadership qualities in the life of Prophet Isa:

1. Righteousness

Allah says, "Isa will speak to the people in the cradle and in maturity and will be of the righteous" (Qur'an 3:46). "And Zakariya and Yahya and Isa and Elyas - and all were of the righteous" (Qur'an 6:85). Inspite of all these good qualities, Prophet Isa will not be a god but remain a human being. He will be in the company of the righteous people.

2. Magnanimity

Abu Huraira narrated that the Messenger of Allah said, "Isa son of Maryam saw a man stealing and asked him, "Did you steal?". He said, "No, by Allah, besides whom there is no god. So, Isa said, "I believe in Allah and contradict my eyes"" (Bukhari). Allah grants His prophets large heartedness: The thief swore by Allah that he didn't steal. Isa

preferred to hold a good opinion of him and protect him from disgrace. When prophets saw some wrong, they do not keep quiet about it. Hence Isa questioned the man. However, the name of Allah is so great that if it is sworn by; then the person should be believed. Isa did not accuse the thief of a false vow.

One should conceal the faults of others to protect people from disgrace. However if the rights of other people are liable to be encroached upon, then the person's sins may be disclosed, but only to the relevant people. Allah sees all, nothing escapes Him. It is not our job to unnecessarily punish every wrong doer. If a false oath is taken, Allah will deal with it.

3. Communication

Prophet Isa was a righteous man and a teacher. He showed miracles. He informed his friends what kind of supper waited for them at home and what they had hidden and where. When young, he accompanied his mother to Jerusalem. There he joined a crowd listening to the lecture of the Rabbis (Jewish priests). After listening intently, he asked questions and expressed his opinion. The learned rabbis were disturbed by the boy's boldness and puzzled by the questions he asked, for they were unable to answer him. They tried to silence him, but he ignored their attempts and continued to express his views. Isa became so involved in this exchange that he forgot he was expected back home.

In the meantime, his mother went home, thinking that he might have gone back with relatives or friends. When she arrived, she discovered that he was not there, so she returned to the city to look for him. At last she found him sitting among the learned, conversing with them. He appeared to be quite at ease, as if he had been doing this all his life. (Ibn Kathir).

4. Sincerity

Prophet Isa was in confrontation with evil doers. He told them to desist from hypocrisy, show and false praise. They should not preoccupy themselves solely with the goods of this passing world; rather they must pay attention to life hereafter that would be everlasting. Prophet Isa told them that excessive devotion to this world led to sin. Believers know that their sustenance is with Allah, so they place trust in Him. Prophet Isa continued to invite people to worship the Only Lord, Who is without partner, just as he invited them to purify the heart and soul (Ibn Kathir).

Conclusion

Prophet Isa was one of the greatest Prophets. He was a righteous man who denounced materialism. He was a man with a large heart and wisdom. In a materialistic age of luxury and worship of gold, Prophet Isa called his people to a nobler life, by word and deed. This exemplary life was the correct response to diseases of his age. Prophet Isa continued inviting people to Almighty Allah. He clarified that there is no mediation between the Creator and His creatures. However, Prophet Isa was in conflict with the Jews' superficial interpretation of the Torah. He said that he did not come to abrogate the Torah, but to complete it by reviving its spirit.

